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Angel's Work.—In one of the letters of Robertson, of Brighton, he tells of a lady who related to him "the delight, the tears of gratitude which she had witnessed in a poor girl to whom, in passing, I gave a kind look on going out of church on Sunday. What a lesson! How cheaply happiness can be given! What opportunities we miss of doing an angel's work! I remember doing it, full of sad feelings, passing on, and thinking no more about it; and it gave an hour's sunshine to a human life, and lightened the load of life to a human heart for a time!" If even a look can do so much, who shall estimate the power of kind or unkind words in making married life happy or miserable? In the home circle more than anywhere else—

"Words are mighty, words are living:
Serpents with their venomous stings,
Or bright angels, crowding round us,
With heaven's light upon their wings:
Every word has its own spirit,
True or false that never dies;
Every word man's lips have uttered
Echoes in God's skies."

TREATISE,

&c.

ON THE RECORDS OF THE CREATION.

Mundum esse conspicimus, Deum esse credimus; quod autem Deus mundum fecerit, nulli tutiùs confidimus, quàm ipsi Deo.

August. de Civ. Dei.

A

TREATISE

ON THE

RECORDS OF THE CREATION,

AND ON THE

MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE CREATOR;

WITH

PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE JEWISH HISTORY,

AND

TO THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PRINCIPLE OF POPULATION WITH THE WISDOM AND GOODNESS OF THE DEITY.

BY JOHN BIRD SUMNER, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.

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PREFACE.

SEVERAL years ago, Mr. Burnett, a Scottish gentleman, among other instances of distinguished munificence, which have rendered it impracticable to comply with his own earnest wish of keeping his name concealed,* bequeathed premiums of the sums of twelve hundred and four hundred pounds, for two Treatises upon the following subject: "The Evidence that there is a Being all-powerful, wise, and good, by whom every Thing exists; and particularly to obviate Difficulties regarding the Wisdom and the Good-

* A more detailed memoir of this gentleman has been prepared by Dr. Brown, Professor of Divinity, and Principal of Marischal College in Aberdeen; and is prefixed to his Treatise on the same subject, to which the premium of twelve hundred pounds was adjudged.

ness of the Deity; and this in the first place, from Considerations independent of written Revelation; and in the second place, from the Revelation [illegible]: and from the whole, to point out the Inferences most necessary for, and useful to Mankind." The Ministers of the established Church, and the Principals and Professors of King's and Marischal colleges of Aberdeen, and the Trustees of the Testator, were appointed to nominate three Judges who should decide upon the comparative merits of the Treatises that might be laid before them with sealed mottos, by the 1st of January 1814.

In this liberality the following Treatise originated, to which the premium of 400*l.* was awarded by the judges chosen according to the instructions of the Testator; namely the late Professor Gerard, whose death the university has since had to lament, and Professors Hamilton and Glennie, of Aberdeen.

The first view of the subject thus proposed for consideration, presents the appearance of a country, every spot of which is appropriated and pre-occupied. The EVIDENCES of religion, it is true, were not the earliest objects of British theology. The great divines who led the Reformation, and those who followed their steps during the first half of the succeeding century, were chiefly employed in clearing the majestic fabric of Christianity, from the weeds and rubbish by which it had been so long obscured. Attention is first due to those *within* the Church: it was, therefore, for some time a sufficient labour to extricate the true doctrines of the [illegible] from the errors which had long overrun them: and when a right faith had been once laid as a foundation, and an Apostolical worship established, to raise upon it that pure and holy practice which is its fit and proper ornament, instead of that lax and compromising morality which is the decisive condemnation of

the church of Rome, and the inveterate scandal of its professors.

When, however, the genius of this illustrious age had set up the Protestant faith, and the rule of life belonging to it on an immoveable basis, the attention was naturally directed, in the next place, to those *without* the pale of Christianity. Accordingly its agreement in all points, with the universal tenets of natural religion; the insufficiency, at the same time, of natural religion both to inform and to sanction; the acquaintance we derive from reason with the Creator and his attributes, and the conformity of the appearance of the universe with the conclusions at which reason arrives: these subjects of perpetual interest have called forth talents worthy of their importance, and have received an accession of light from learning, genius, and industry, through the successive generations of Stillingfleet, Clarke, Butler, Warburton, and Paley.

If it is hopeless to look out for a vacant spot in a district so fully occupied, the next object is to fix upon ground which stands most in need of farther cultivation.* This view of the subject determined me, among the various lines of argument which all tend to the same point, to rest my principal evidence of the existence of the Creator, upon the credibility of the Mosaic records of the creation. Neither does it appear that the most unanswerable argument, or irrefragable demonstration, can produce a conviction at all comparable to that which arises from a firm belief that the fact in question has been made known to us by revelation.

I am aware that it may be urged as an objection to this plan, that it carries us away

* When the plan of this work was arranged, and the first part of it written, Dr. Graves's learned Discourses on the Pentateuch had not appeared; nor Dr. Ireland's equally able Lectures on [illegible] Paganism compared.

from NATURAL theology. But, if it does so, we are only following the course to which the subject itself must lead every reflecting mind. That there is a Creator,

All Nature cries aloud in all her works;

but Nature, though she always proclaimed the same truth, yet spoke in vain to the sages of antiquity, who either altogether failed to interpret her language, or suffered the still whisper of "Divine Philosophy" to be lost amidst the various bustle of the world. It is true, we understand astronomy better than Thales or Pythagoras, and natural history and anatomy better than Aristotle or Galen: the treatises of Ray, or Derham, or Paley, could not have been written two thousand years ago: but the ancients, imperfect as their sciences were, knew more than enough of the harmony and design of the universe, to draw out an unanswerable argument from final causes: and, in point of fact,

they did draw out both that and other arguments so far as to leave us indisputable proof that the God of NATURAL THEOLOGY will never be any thing more than the dumb idol of philosophy: neglected by the philosopher himself, and unknown to the multitude; acknowledged in the closet, and forgotten in the world.

The real use of Natural Theology to ourselves, is to show the strong probability of that being true which revelation declares. For, when Natural Theology has told all her story, the reasonable question presses us still, Has, then, the Creator, whose existence you point out so clearly, maintained no communication with this visible emanation of his power? Has he revealed no commands, and prescribed no worship to the human race? Then he remains the inactive deity of philosophic theism:* the

* The doctrine of Socrates affords the only material exception.

indifferent spectator of the crimes, the virtue, the cares, and the sorrows of mankind:

> Who sees with equal eyes, as God of all,
> A hero perish, or a sparrow fall;
> Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd
> And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

The truth is, however, that to descend from the height to which we have been gradually raised by Revelation, and argue still upon the level of unassisted reason, would be impossible if it were desirable, and unprofitable even if it were possible. It would be impossible, because the rays of knowledge which Revelation has generally diffused will imperceptibly penetrate, however thick a veil we may choose to spread before our eyes: and it would be unprofitable, because, as I have already hinted, philosophy may silence atheism, but will never command practical obedience, or inspire practical devotion.*

* "The bounds of this knowledge are, that it sufficeth to convince atheism, but not to inform religion; and therefore

Where Reason, however, leaves us, Revelation takes us up; and furnishes us with a record of the creation, preserved by the wisdom, and authenticated by the power, of the Creator: although it has sometimes been fashionable to attack , as Paley expresses it, through the sides of Judaism, it will, I trust, appear to a candid inquirer, no less morally impossible for the early Hebrew writings to have been forged, than for the C . itself to have been fabricated by its first teachers: and a difficulty no less inexplicable to account for the existence of the Jewish law and religion, independently of the facts which are attested in the Pentateuch; than for the promulgation of (- , independently of the miracles and re-

there was never miracle wrought by God to convert an atheist, because the light of nature might have led him to confess a God; but miracles have been wrought to convert idolaters and the superstitious, because no light of nature extendeth to declare the will and true worship of God."—Bacon's Advancement of Learning.

surrection of the Messiah. To bring into popular view the nature and extent of this argument, is the principal object of the first of the following volumes.

In the second volume I have endeavoured to obviate those difficulties regarding the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, which arise from the existence of physical and moral evil. These difficulties have been deemed important by reflecting persons in all ages: and some superficial writers, though professing to acknowledge the Power and Intelligence displayed in the creation, have ventured to blaspheme the MORAL attributes of the Deity, on the ground of the guilt and ignorance, the poverty and wretchedness, with which the world abounds.

But the subject has been made still more interesting, since it has been recently and clearly

proved, that the greater part of these evils are the necessary consequence of a cause universally operating, viz. the natural tendency of mankind to increase in a quicker ratio than their subsistence. So that it becomes almost hopeless to expect any material diminution of the degree of evil actually existing; and the imputation may now appear to attach upon the divine ordinances, which was formerly cast upon accidental inconveniences, or human institutions. On this account it seemed peculiarly desirable to inquire, if possible, into the final cause of that provision for replenishing the world, which is known to be so universally active, and has engaged of late years so much attention; and to show that the present and actual state of the world is not only consistent with the wisdom and goodness of God, but affords perpetual testimony of both.

In the prosecution of this attempt, I have

not ventured to take the Christian Revelation as the groundwork of my argument, because, that being granted, any treatise upon the divine attributes would be superfluous: at the same time I should consider it equally absurd and unprofitable to argue in this age, and in this country, as if we were really as much in the dark respecting the counsels of God, or the object of man's existence, as Socrates or Cicero. The experiment of vindicating the moral administration of the universe without the help of a future state, has been sufficiently tried. The necessity of general laws, or the inevitable consequences of human liberty, or the degrees of perfection of possible worlds, may serve by turns to exercise, or amuse, or perplex the reasoning powers of a few philosophers. But something more satisfactory must confute the sceptic: something more consolatory must soothe the afflicted: something more irresistible must arm the moralist. It is easy for a philosophical Emperor

to exclaim " O world, all things are suitable to me which are suitable to thee. Nothing is too early or too late for me which is seasonable for thee. All is fruit to me which thy seasons bring forth. From thee are all things; in thee are all things; for thee are all things." But the voice of the multitude will still reply: Why must our poverty contribute to another's prosperity? Why must Epictetus be depressed, that Epaphroditus may be elevated? Cannot Omnipotence provide general good, except at the expense of individual misery?

The truth is, that Reason and Revelation mutually support and assist each other in contemplating the justice and goodness of the Deity, no less than in ascertaining the fact of the creation. If we look to this world alone, we see indisputable benevolence, and are convinced; we see indisputable evil, and are confounded. We argue, that, " if there's a power

above us, he must delight in virtue; and that which he delights in, must be happy;" but the question still recurs, does not the actual appearance of the world disprove this rational conclusion?

On this account, it was a sound and excellent judgment, which directed that the attributes of the Deity should be treated of, "in the first place, from considerations independent of written Revelation; and in the second place, from the Revelation of [illegible] Natural reason conducts us to the doors of the temple; but he, who would penetrate farther, and behold in their just proportions the greatness and majesty of the Deity within, must consent to be led by Revelation. No other guide can enter the sanctuary in which he resides, or read the book in which His counsels are written. Indeed, I feel, that in pursuing those counsels through the intricate paths of natural and moral

evil, though with the light of Revelation before me, I have sometimes ventured upon dangerous ground. But wherever sceptics dare to tread, the firm believer of Revelation need not be afraid to follow; in full confidence that every just research into the laws by which the moral man is regulated, as well as every fresh discovery in the constitution of the natural world, will tend eventually to illustrate the majesty of that Being, whose eternal counsels direct the whole, and from whom the will and the power to search out those counsels ultimately proceed.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

PART I.

CHAP. I.

On the Opinion of the Eternity of the World. (Page 1.)

Preliminary Observations.

Statement of the Opinion of the Eternity of the World.

Metaphysical Objections of that Opinion, from the Nature of universal Substance; from the existence of Motion; and from the Nature of necessary Existence.

CHAP. II.

On the Opinion which ascribes the Formation of the World to Chance. (Page 21.)

Statement of Epicurus's Cosmogony.

Its Contradiction to Reason and Experience.

Chance never called in by natural Philosophers to account for Phænomena. Instance from the Strata of the Earth and Saltness of the Sea, &c.

Conclusion as to the Effect of the Argument from final Causes.

CHAP. III.—SECT. I.

On the Probability that some Account of the Creation would be revealed and preserved. (Page 32.)

Statement of the Reasons for that Probability.
Mosaic History.
Collateral Testimony to its Truth.
Its internal Evidence unobjectionable; and therefore insisted on in the following Argument.
Preliminary Inquiries as to the Nature of the History, and its Origin from Revelation and Tradition.
Collateral Evidence in favour of original Revelation, from the Nature of Language: from the slow Progress of the Arts: from the agricultural State described by Moses.
Nothing improbable in the Idea of original Revelation.

CHAP. III.—SECT II.

The Object of the Hebrew Polity. (Page 58.)

Its avowed Intention to maintain the Worship of the Creator.
Proof from the Decalogue; and from the Institution of the Sabbath.
Argument from the Establishment of such a civil Polity.

CHAP. III.—SECT. III.

Peculiarity of the Design of the Hebrew Polity. (P. 70.)

Plan of other Legislators.
Lycurgus and Solon: Romulus and Numa, compared with Moses: their religious Rites the Effect of Policy.

Zaleucus: inferior to Moses in Tone of Authority.
Miraculous Interpositions appealed to throughout the Law.
Antiquity of the Law. Absurdity of the contrary Opinion, from the Impossibility of assigning any period to its Introduction, on other Grounds; and from the Nature of its Enactments.
Recapitulation.

CHAP. III.—SECT. IV.

Peculiar Sanction of the Mosaic Law. (Page 100.)

Moses relies on divine Interposition.
Duration of the civil Polity dependent on the Allegiance of the People to the Worship of the Creator.
Punishment of Slavery threatened to Disobedience. Mode of averting that Punishment.
Contrary to the Course of human Affairs.
Rewards promised.
Comparison of Mahomet.
Extraordinary Providence necessary, under the Mosaic Institutions; as the Sabbath, sabbatical Year, &c.
Proved by subsequent Events of the History.
This Necessity foreseen by Moses.
Peculiar Provisions of the Jewish Law confirmed by collateral Testimony.
Conclusion from the Peculiarity of its Design and Sanctions.

CHAP. III.—SECT. V.

On the Religious Opinions of the Hebrews. (Page 134.)

Inquiry as to their Superiority over those of other Nations.
Universal Belief among the Hebrews of the Existence of one

omnipotent Creator. Different Case of other ancient People.

Hebrew Literature: confined to sacred Subjects; and containing sublime Descriptions of the Attributes, &c.

Comparison of these with heathen Hymns. Orpheus. Isaiah. Fragment of Euripedes. 102d Psalm. Hymn of Cleanthes. Extract from Book of Wisdom. Mythological Hymns. Carmina Sæcularia.

Concluding Remarks.

CHAP. III.—SECT. VI.

On the national Worship of the Hebrews. (Page 161.)

National Worship an important Test.

General Errors of the ancient Philosophers, and Multitude.

Idolatry. Forbidden to the Jews.

National Worship of Greece. Chorus from the Œdipus of Sophocles. Roman Superstition. Serpent brought from Epidaurus. Erection of the Statue of Jupiter during the Catilinarian Conspiracy. Contrast of the Jewish Worship. Solomon's Dedication of Temple. Hezekiah's Prayer. Belief retained throughout the whole Jewish History.

CHAP. III.—SECT. VII.

On the Principles of Hebrew Morality. (Page 184.)

I. Authority assumed by Moses as to Virtues of imperfect Obligation. The Welfare of the State was the sole Object of heathen Legislation. Consequent Purity of the Jewish Morality.

II. Infanticide at Sparta, and generally in Greece, &c. Forbidden to the Jews, in consistency with their Views of the Creator.

III. Motives of Jewish Morality, the divine Favour or Displeasure

IV. Humanity prescribed by the Jewish Law, in Conformity with the same Principles. Treatment of Slaves and Strangers, compared with other nations.

Argument arising from this Difference.

CHAP. III.—SECT. VIII. and IX.

On the Causes to which the Superiority of the Mosaic Theology may be referred.

SECT. VIII.

Whether Moses could have invented the Doctrine he taught concerning the Creation. (Page 217.)

Belief of a Creator agreeable to Reason, but not discovered by it. Polytheism of the Ancients. Not dispelled by the Philosophers. None of them taught a rational System.

Sublime Passages from Plato and others. Difference between the Philosophers and Moses examined. 1. Their Ignorance of the Personality of the Deity. This Defect inherent in the System of Pythagoras and the Stoics: and of Aristotle. Practical Consequences of such an Error. II. Socrates. His Superiority. But his Doctrine not applicable to an Account of the Creation. Plato's Belief

of the independent Existence of Matter. The Clearness of the Views of Moses compared.

No Arguments unknown to the Philosophers, which could have convinced Moses of the Unity. Argument from final Causes clearly understood by Socrates and his Disciples. Argument from the Necessity of a First Cause used by Aristotle. Positive Conviction of Moses.

Difference between the Doctrine of the Philosophers and of Moses acknowledged by the Converts to Christianity.

Improvement in the Doctrines of Philosophy as the Scriptures became known.

Concluding Remarks.

SECT. IX.

Moses neither received his Doctrine of the Creation from the Egyptians, nor from the popular belief of the Israelites. (Page 263.)

I. Egyptian Doctrines. Grossness of their Idolatry. Esoteric Belief of their Priests. Its inconsistency. Mistaken Ideas of Egyptian Superiority.

Reserve of the Egyptian Priests, as to their Doctrine.

Immortality of the Soul.

II. Difficulty of accounting for the Existence of a pure Belief among the Israelites, except from original Revelation.

Their State Pastoral: that State unfavourable to Literature. Proofs. Unhesitating Declaration of Moses. Conclusiv Argument arising from it.

Recapitulation of the whole Evidence. Absurd Consequences of rejecting it, deduced from the Peculiarities of

the Hebrew History and Law. The Evidence amounts to moral Certainty.

CHAP. IV.

Conclusions from the foregoing Argument. (Page 297.)

Recapitulation of the demonstrative, analogical, and historical Argument. Question considered, whether the Evidence is such as ought to influence the Practice of Mankind. Nature of demonstrative Evidence. Its narrow Extent. Different Provinces of several Sorts of Evidence. Their Application distinct. Question, as to the Liability to Error. No Species of Evidence free from such Liability. Probable Evidence of most general Importance in human Life. Obligation it imposes. Our usual Confidence in it. Instances; as Voyage of Columbus. Conclusion.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

That the Mosaic History is not inconsistent with geological Discoveries. (Page 321.)

Introductory Remarks, as to the Objections to the Authority of the Pentateuch.

Statement of the real Question as to Geology.

Character of the Mosaic Records.

Outline of the Mosaic Account of the Creation.

Results of geological Researches.

Evidence of the Deluge universal and indisputable. Mosaic Account of the Extent of that Catastrophe. Subterraneous Fire, the probable Agent. Traces of such Agency.
Alternate Revolutions supposed by Cuvier.
Concluding Remarks on geological Hypotheses.

No. II.

On the Descent of Mankind from a single Pair. (P. 342.)

Statement of the Objection.
Question examined by Analogy. Varieties among brute Animals; the same in Degree and Kind as those in the human Race.
Causes of them: Climate, Domestication, Food, &c.
The effect of these Causes on Man, considered.
Climate alone insufficient to produce the Varieties of Complexion
Known Effect of local Causes: and Instances.
Effect of the Reverse of those Circumstances. Instances of gradual Approximation towards the European Feature and Complexion. On the Perpetuation of Varieties: how far favoured in the early Ages of the World.
No Advantage gained by the Hypothesis of Different Species.

No. III.

On the Authenticity and Antiquity of the Pentateuch. (Page 379.)

Proof from Style.
Brief View of the principal Objections.
Argument from the Samaritan Pentateuch.

A

TREATISE,

&c.

PART I.

ON THE EVIDENCES OF A CREATION.

CHAPTER I.

On the Opinion of the Eternity of the World.

It appeared to Hume that Milton has justly represented Adam, when rising at once, in Paradise, and in the full perfection of his senses, as astonished at the glorious appearances of nature, the heaven, the air, the earth, his own organs and members; and led by the contemplation of them to ask, whence this wonderful scene arose?* And it is somewhat curious,

* Natural History of Religion, sect. 1.

that an ancient philosopher, in a well-known passage of similar tendency, has furnished us with the answer which the scene would suggest to him: "If it were possible that persons who had long lived in subterraneous habitations, and had enjoyed only a vague report of the existence and power of the gods, should suddenly emerge into the light and lustre of the world we inhabit, they would no sooner behold the earth, and sea, and sky, or understand the regular order of the seasons and the vastness of the heavenly bodies, than they would at once acknowledge both the existence of superior powers, and that these wonders were of their creation."*

This seems reasonable; and yet if it is so, whence comes Atheism? and why have not these wonders uniformly had the effect of lead-

* Quoted by Cicero, Nat. Deor. ii. 37; as if from Aristotle. If the fragment were really from a work of Aristotle, it could not originally have been intended to convey his own sentiments.

ing mankind to the discovery and contemplation of the Supreme Being?

It may afford some explanation of this, to observe, that mankind do *not* rise like Adam, in Paradise, in the full perfection of their faculties. The magnificent fabric of the universe which is before our eyes from our infancy, and gradually comprehended as the intellect expands, loses its effect upon the mind; but would strike us with irresistible conviction, if all the beauty, variety, and regularity of the world opened upon us at once, when the powers of the understanding were capable of appreciating them. To a certain degree, this may account for the indifference with which mankind in all ages have been apt to survey the wonderful scene around them, and their relation to its Author.

There are many ages during which we have little record left of the progress of the human mind. But according to the earliest writings we have received from Greece, the country

with which we are best acquainted, it does not appear that for a length of time, the beings which were termed Gods were considered otherwise than as parts of the general system; or that any notion had been attained of a Creator, upon whose fiat the universe depended. Nor ought we to wonder that men, in that rude period of civilization, should not have been led to form rational ideas of a Creator from the works of the creation; it is an inference which the great mass of mankind would never draw, if left to their own reflections. Simple as the analogical reasoning from effect to cause, from contrivance to a contriver, may seem, still it is reasoning, and, as such, it is the business of a mind in some degree improved, and abstracted from sensible objects. In the first stages of society there are no such minds; and it is no more surprising that, by the great body of mankind in every age, the world is seen and inhabited without exciting awe and admiration, than that a peasant who finds himself placed by the fortune of his birth in any particular country, should be little solicit-

ous about its history, antiquity, or earliest founders.

As soon, however, as the progress of civilization had improved reason, and given opportunity for reflection, the existence and origin of the world presented the first and most interesting object of inquiry. The earliest sages that we hear of as engaged at all in philosophical speculation, turned their attention to physics, and the explanation of the appearance of the natural world.* It was then that the question was first started, How, at whose order, and to what end, this universe derived its form and being: a question which proved the most fruitful theme of disputation among the ancient philosophers; which even in the dark ages, however frivolous the perplexities to which it gave rise, still served to keep alive the spark of ratiocination; and which, since the revival of literature, has employed alike the pen of

* See Adam Smith's account of this, Wealth of Nations vol. iii. book v. chap. 1. Also Stewart's Essays, Prelim. Dissert. xxiii.

authors most distinguished for wit and learning, for genius and logical precision.

To this interesting problem, one of the three following answers must necessarily be returned :

I. Either the world must have existed from eternity the same ;

II. Or it was formed by chance, at some unassigned period, out of pre-existing materials ;

III. Or it was created by an omnipotent and intelligent Being.

The two first of these opinions it will be enough to glance at very slightly. It seems to be now both generally and justly considered, that what *can* be done by metaphysics, upon this great subject, has already been done so completely, as to leave little for these later days except the repetition of points which have been long ago established, or the gleaning of arguments which earlier disputants abandoned as not worth taking. The great difference between

metaphysical and moral reasoning is, that the former is a mine that is quickly exhausted, while the latter is continually deriving fresh supplies from the progressive advance of our physical or historical researches. The question as to the eternity of the world, however, is strictly metaphysical, and can only be met by metaphysical arguments; as such, therefore, I should leave it altogether in the powerful hands of Locke, and Clarke, and Wollaston, if it did not stand in the way of a more consistent and rational belief, and on that account require some short consideration.

Whether we adopt the Egyptian or Mosaic chronology; whether we suppose our globe to be six million or six thousand years old, it is of all truths that depend upon reason the most obvious, that something must have existed from eternity. Perhaps this is the only truth established by metaphysics which no sophist has been subtle or hardy enough to impugn. It is not, therefore, surprising, that the apparent simplicity of supposing the world itself to have

been that eternal thing, should have disposed philosophers to the early adoption of such a tenet. It was, in fact, an extensive opinion among the ancients, and has been the chief resource of modern atheists.

In the statement of the system there are some shades of difference. Aristotle, for example, whilst he held that the world was neither produced, nor is capable of corruption, but is one and everlasting, acknowledged, at the same time, the necessity of some intervening power, to give motion to that which is itself inert and immovable. The generality of the followers* of this system, however, have maintained, in the words of the ancient philosopher, *that God*,† *the active and efficient cause, and matter, are so essentially united, as to be one and the same ;* or,

* Ocellus Lucanus, if his jargon deserves the name of system: Zeno afterwards more clearly; who was followed, with some shades of verbal difference, by the Eleatics and Peripatetics: Pliny, lib. ii. cap. 1, very explicitly: and Spinoza, with most of the modern atheists.

† Diog. Laert. lib. vii.

according to his modern disciple,* *that there is only one substance in nature,* endued with infinite attributes, and, amongst them, with extension and thought.

The present age does not so much require to be set free from error, as to be reminded of truth. We should be ill employed in dragging from their obscurity the doctrines of Spinoza, in order to employ against them at any length the arguments by which the reasoners of his own time either demonstrated the falsehood of his premises, or the absurdity of his conclusions.† Professing to clear from its difficulties the received system of theology, he introduced his own with axioms which shock our reason, and directly oppose our natural judgment.‡ It will only be necessary to hint concisely at a few of the absurd conclusions to which his

* Spinoza. See Bayle, vol. v. p. 299.

† Particularly Clarke, in answer to Spinoza; and Sykes on Natural and Revealed Religion, in answer to Toland, who adopted the same system, under the title of The Pantheistic Scheme.

‡ Bayle, vol. v. p. 212.

principles lead, in order to show that we are justified in looking farther than the hypothesis of the world's eternity for a satisfactory explanation of its present existence.

I. The notion which our senses present to us respecting the world, leads us to consider it as consisting of an infinite number of parts, subservient, perhaps, to one another, and to a certain degree mutually dependent, but still, as existences, perfectly and essentially distinct; collected, as a number of individuals may be collected together; but not united, as the members of the same individual. Those, however, who argue for the eternity of the world, comprehend all this infinite variety of parts, in one *sole, universal, and eternal substance.* If by substance they here understand merely the imaginary support of the numerous attributes and qualities which are found in the world, substance is manifestly not a real existence, but an abstract term; of which, as it has no archetype in nature, it is impossible for us to form any accurate or definite idea.

But the system involves, at least, this absurdity; that whatever can be affirmed or denied of any of the parts of this compound substance, must be affirmed or denied of the whole; and, whatever can be suffered or felt by any of the parts, must be felt and suffered by the whole; must equally effect God and man, bodies organized or unorganized, animate or inanimate matter. Such consequences could never be admitted by any reasonable being; and such premises could never have been laid down, except under shelter of the ambiguities of language, which sometimes renders substance an abstract term, coined for the convenience of the understanding, and sometimes gives it a real existence as body.*

II. When, however, we have proceeded so far as to conceive the universe as one individual substance, the attributes with which it must

* This remark is sufficiently justified by the observation of Hobbes so frequently quoted:—"Incorporeal substance, are words, which, when joined together, destroy each other." An observation, solely founded on the ambiguity of the word substance.

be endowed will be no less embarrassing than its first existence. For, it is too plain to be denied, that whatever we find to exist, must be derived from the independent Being that existed from eternity. It follows, that this independent Being must either have possessed in himself whatever exists, or must have had the power of producing it. We find, however, sense and motion to exist; and if that eternal thing is the world itself, there is no other source to which we can refer the origin of sense and motion.

Now, without attempting to define matter or mind, and only taking the evidence of our senses for the existence of the former, it is surely safe to affirm that we find in ourselves, and observe in other animals, in some in an equal, in others in an inferior degree, a power of sensation and reflection, and a power of moving ourselves and other things. We find in the world other bodies, which are to all appearance entirely without the sensitive or reflecting power, and are certainly incapable

of spontaneous motion. It has, therefore, been pretty generally concluded, that animals endued with these qualities, owe their superiority over the other bodies which are without them, and which we term inanimate, to the exclusive possession of an immaterial substance, which philosophers have called spirit; and that there are, in fact, two sorts of beings in the world, cogitative and incogitative, corporeal and spiritual.

This difference is altogether denied by those who assert the universe to be one substance. "The same matter," they affirm,* "crystallizes in the mineral, vegetates in the plant, lives and is organized in the brute, feels, thinks, and reasons in man. Thoughts and sentiments proceed from peculiar distributions of atoms in the human brain; and as necessarily result

* Academical Questions, p. 251, et seq.: a book, of which the precise object is not declared; but in which the old atheistic and sceptical arguments are brought again into view, according to their several systems, with considerable labour, and placed in as popular a light as their nature allows.

from its organization, as the forms and modes of being, in inferior creatures, result from the peculiar disposition and arrangement of their component particles, and the properties inherent in these. The reason why a stone falls to the ground, and the reason why the globe of the earth turns on its axis, are equally to be found in the book of nature. In man, the machinery is more wonderful, and the motion more complicated, than in any other creature. Hence, is his superiority in the scale of existence; and hence, too, result all his faculties of thinking and acting."

It might be sufficient merely to ask, whether these passages contain a more satisfactory explanation of the phenomena of thought and motion, than to suppose that the "first thinking Being," namely, a God distinct from the visible world, "should have communicated to certain systems of created senseless matter, put together as he thinks fit, some degrees of sense, perception, and thought."* But it is impos-

* Locke, Essay on Human understanding, vol. ii. p. 167.

sible not to observe in addition, that the argument involves a confusion between the mechanical laws of matter, and the spontaneous motion of animate nature. In order to establish the pretended analogy, the motion of a stone, and of the globe of the earth, ought either to be *voluntary*, or that of man, and other living animals, to be *necessary*, and determined by prescribed laws. Man is subject to the laws which govern matter in the same way as other bodies are subject to them, and is confined to the earth by their influence; but man is endued with a faculty altogether distinct and separate, which is totally wanting to unorganized matter. The difference between the power of beginning motion, and passive inactivity; between inward consciousness and sluggish insensibility; is not such as to be hastily accounted for by the different situation of the primary atoms of the same material substance. We are reduced, therefore to the dilemma of supposing, either that the whole universe is one cogitative, sentient being, as some have affirmed, but, I think, without much countenance from reason

and our natural apprehensions; or of embracing the manifest absurdity, that the one universal substance is endued with attributes which are wanting to many of the parts of which it is composed.*

III. It will be sufficient to point out one other inadmissible conclusion resulting from the hypothesis now under consideration. If the universe itself is the first eternal Being, its existence is *necessary*, as metaphysicians speak; and it must be possessed of all those qualities which are inseparable from necessary existence. Of this nature are immutability, and perfection. For, change is the attribute of imperfection; and imperfection is incompatible with that Being, which is, as the hypothesis affirms, independent, and therefore can have no possible source of imperfection. To suppose, therefore, of the first independent Being, that

* "As substance cannot exist without all its attributes, so extension must always exist with thought." Ac. Quest. 237. The necessary inference is *not* added, that thought must always exist with extension.

it could have existed otherwise than it is, is no less contrary to the idea of necessity, with which we set out, than to suppose it not to exist at all.

Now, it is justly observed by Locke, that "though our general specific conception of matter makes us speak of it as one thing; yet really all matter is not one independent thing, neither is there any such thing existing as one material being, or any single body that we know or can conceive." It is manifestly plain, as has been already hinted, that what we term the material world is made up of an infinite number of parts. But as the whole is supposed eternal, independent, self-existent, so must all the parts exist independently.† And as it has been declared a contradiction to suppose of the whole that it should have existed different from what it is, so is it no less absurd to suppose the dif-

† Thus Ocellus Lucanus; "The world having been eternal, it is necessary that the things existing in it, and the parts of it, viz. the heaven, earth, and air, must have been eternal: for, of these the world itself consists."

ferent existence of any of the parts, "since all variety of difference of existence must needs arise from some external cause, and be dependent upon it, and proportionable to the efficacy of that cause, whatsoever it be."

How contrary the very form and appearance of the world is to this notion of necessity, need not be much insisted upon. Many parts of it are, in fact, annually undergoing the greatest changes. Probably no theorist can be found hardy enough to assert of particular lakes or seas, or mountains, even that they *did* exist, much less that they *must* have existed necessarily, and have borne the form they bear at present, from eternity. Yet, if you take these qualities away from individual parts of the universe, a Socratic disputant may stick close to the concession, and gradually deny them of the whole.* Can we conceive it otherwise than arbitrary, whether our earth should be attended

* Sykes has done this: "If the universe is God, every part of him, except what constitutes space, may be conceived

by a single moon, or be surrounded by as many satellites as Jupiter or Saturn? But if the world be *necessarily* existent, these things are not arbitrary, but governed by the same immutable necessity by which the world itself exists: unless it can be denied that to suppose the possibility of alteration in that which exists necessarily, involves a contradiction, and is absurd.

These cursory observations are sufficient to show that the doctrine of the world's eternity is embarrassed by objections which forcibly urge us to seek some further explanation of the phenomena by which we are surrounded. If it be asked, what advantage can be expected from bringing the subject back at all to metaphysics; a sort of argument which an Alciphron may say at last "he has always found dry and jejune, unsuited to his way of thinking, which may perhaps puzzle, but will never convince him;"* I would reply, that there is

not necessary, and yet the whole is necessary. Can any idea be more self-contradictory than this?" Ch. iv.

some advantage in showing that, to whichever side we turn, insurmountable difficulties oppose us, till we admit the agency of an intelligent immaterial Creator; whose presence in the system at once dispels the cloud, and diffuses the only light which on a subject so far removed from our comprehensions as the creation of the world, our minds are capable of receiving. It will not be denied, that if metaphysical speculations were adverse to the existence of such a Being, the positive evidence which asserted it would require extraordinary strength and cogency. It is reasonable therefore to expect, that whatever historical or probable evidence we may hereafter find in favour of the existence of a Creator, should derive at least as much additional force from the concurrence of metaphysical arguments, as it would be deprived of, if such researches terminated in the contrary conclusion.

* See Berkely, Minute Philos. vol. ii. p. 445, quarto edit.

CHAPTER II.

On the Opinion which ascribes the Formation of the World to Chance.

WHILST the most reasonable* among the heathen philosophers who have left any record of their opinions, asserted that matter was itself eternal, but moulded into the form of our world by the operation of an intelligent Deity; and others, (as we have seen,) deifying the world itself, contended for the eternity of its visible form; the hypothesis of Epicurus and his followers differed altogether from them all; and referred the existence of the world neither to the necessity of its own nature, nor to the inter-

* I do not hesitate to give this character to Pythagoras and Plato, notwithstanding the absurdity attending their doctrine of the eternity of matter.

ference of a Divine Architect,* but to the fortuitous concurrence of eternal atoms. *Atoms*, he affirmed, *of an infinite smallness and in perpetual motion, compose the universe: and falling by chance into the region of our world, were in consequence of their innate motion, brought gradually together, and collected into an indigested mass. These atoms, according to their size and weight, either subsided and settled into earth, or formed themselves into air, or collected themselves into stars; and hence arose the material globe: while the vegetable and animal productions of the earth sprung from various seeds intermixed with the first combination of atoms, and being preserved and nourished by moisture and heat, afterwards grew up into organized bodies of various kinds.* Such was the mechanism of the world of Epicurus.†

It would be idle to enter upon the refutation

* The δημιουργος of Plato.

† See Brucker's Historia Critica Philosophiæ, for the quotations on which this arrangement is founded; or the valuable abridgment of that laborious work, by Enfield.

of an hypothesis which assumes without a shadow of proof or probability, first, that the universe is composed of space and atoms; secondly, that these atoms, without any assignable cause, being impelled from the right line in which they should naturally have been directed, formed the regular and harmonious order of the world; and thirdly, that the seeds of the plants and animals which adorn and inhabit the earth, sprung up spontaneously among the atoms of which it is composed.* But as the word *Chance* has been sometimes repeated in modern days as if it were really something more than an unmeaning and unphilosophical term; it will be proper very briefly to show how entirely we must oppose all the deductions of reason and daily experience, if we for a moment remove from our system the operation and agency of intelligent design.

It is received as an indisputable truth, and

* How much of the same censure is justly applicable to the organic molecules of Buffon, has been observed by Paley, Nat. Theol. chap. 23.

argued and acted upon as such, in the commonest occurrences in life, as well as in the highest researches of philosophy, that a regular and certain effect must be referred to the operation of a definite and sufficient cause: that whatever steadily acts to produce a particular end, must be planned and directed by intelligent contrivance. It results from this habitual conviction, that chance is never called in to explain any of the extraordinary appearances of nature, however much they may baffle the inquiries of philosophy. We have a familiar instance of this, in the strata which compose the earth. These strata have been examined to a considerable depth, and are found to lie sometimes horizontally, as if they had sunk gradually and regularly according to their specific gravity; but varying in other places from this regular direction, they shoot perpendicularly or proceed upwards, and incline at different angles to the horizon. These strata, too, consist of metals, minerals, stones, sands, earth, waters, and matters of every kind, without the slightest appearance of order: and those combinations

have been discovered which seem most perplexing, and irreconcilable with the usual laws of mineral bodies. Accordingly, theories have been ingeniously formed and eagerly defended; and whilst one party endeavours to account for the phenomena from the effects of aqueous solution, the Vulcanists have taken no less pains to explain them by the hypothesis of subterraneous fire, and a state of fusion. Why all this labour? Throughout the natural world perhaps we shall find nothing which bears so strong an appearance of accidental concurrence; yet no one is hardy enough to interpose *chance* as a solution of the difficulty.

The properties of the sea furnish us with another illustration. It is evident that unless it were preserved by its *motion* and *saltness* from putrefaction, it would abound with those unwholesome exhalations which we find in the neighbourhood of stagnant pools and waters. We have here a reason, why it is desirable that the sea should have saltness and motion; but not why it becomes possessed of them. Nu-

merous theories have therefore been devised, though hitherto with little success, to account for its saltness; and notwithstanding many difficulties which embarrass the explanation of the tides from the moon's attraction, we readily acquiesce in that account of their regularity.* It is not enough to say, that the ocean *must either* have been sweet or salt, and chances to be salt; that it *must either* have been in motion or at rest, and chances to be in motion: our inquiries prove our universal sense of the necessity of some adequate cause. But while we expect a reason to be assigned for the regular movement and briny properties of the sea, it would be the basest inconsistency to attribute to chance alone the fact, that it does possess those properties which it is necessary it should possess, lest the atmosphere should be rendered unfit for the respiration of animals so constituted as the inhabitants of the world.

* Those at least who do not, think themselves bound to propose a substitute; as St. Pierre, Etudes de la Nature.

We scrutinize with accurate and attentive research the secret process of evaporation, rarefaction, and condensation; and the admission of a latent power, or occult principle, is reserved as the last refuge of our ignorance. Accordingly an assignable reason has been discovered, from the known properties of fluid bodies, why the vapour from springs and seas and rivers should ascend, till, having obtained a certain height and a certain degree of condensation, it is precipitated again upon the earth, which is thence supplied with a regular accession of moisture, and consequent fertility. He could not then be thought an enlightened reasoner who would ascribe to chance the regular correspondence between the various parts of nature; or, would deny that he sees any proof of a designing cause, when plants are so formed as to be nourished by the moisture for which there is this constant provision, and animals so constituted as to be nourished by the plants thus regularly produced. In fact, every research, nay every single experiment in philosophy, is a practical testimony of our general

conviction that there is contrivance at the bottom of every phenomenon; and is so far a confutation of the Epicurean atheist, that it shows him to be at variance with the universal experience of mankind, on which that conviction is founded.

It must not be altogether omitted, that in the works of human art and labour, nothing is ever left to chance. The most experienced carpenter makes the most constant use of his rule; the oldest mason keeps his wall in the perpendicular by his line. It is impossible, ninety-nine times in a hundred, to make a complete circle or a perfect square without the use of instruments. The story of the painter, who, when his art had failed, produced the foam of his horse's mouth by the accidental dash of his brush, has even found a place in history. Why is this, but from our accumulated experience, that chance, in reality, does nothing at all for us?

This then is the outline of the argument from

final causes against the production of the world from chance. It is the result of our uniform experience, that no certain effect can be obtained without some regular means of contrivance. But whatever part of the universe we examine, from the minutest insect to the noblest animal, from the meanest plant to that magnificent system which the researches of modern astronomers unfold, we trace the undoubted evidence of means corresponding to their intended object, and attaining their end. Therefore we conclude, by a natural and irresistible analogy, that a world which exhibits throughout an unbroken chain of contrivances and means, is the effect, not of fortuitous concurrence in its constituent parts, whether termed molecules or atoms, but of their regular disposition; and is the work, not of chance, but of an intelligent contriver. For, if we should despise the philosopher, who told us that even the rudest and most imperfect petrifactions of vegetable or animal substances were the work of chance: if this is so well acknowledged, that no one has ever dared to supply

the greatest desiderata in philosophy, such as the cause of polarity in the magnet, by attributing it to accidental inclination; and that it would be deemed legitimate proof of insanity in an architect, if he undertook to produce the meanest cabin by the fortuitous concurrence of beams and tiles; we must renounce all consistency of principle, unless we infer that this world, in which we see so many complicated and various means all conspiring to accomplish their prescribed purpose, so many springs of action and motion all coinciding in the most perfect order, was produced, and only could be produced according to the regular design of an intelligent Being.*

* If this Chapter had been intended as any thing more than a brief statement of the nature of the argument from final causes, it would have been necessary of course to detail the chief marks of contrivance which the world exhibits, which have here been only alluded to incidentally. But, in addition to other numerous volumes upon this subject, the recent and popular work of Dr. Paley seems to render any fresh enumeration of those instances quite superfluous. I do not mean to say that the subject is exhausted; nor indeed can it be, till every part of the universe is laid open to our inquiry. But

perhaps there is some justice in the remark, that it already labours under disadvantage from its unlimited extent. "A single example seems altogether as conclusive as a thousand; and he that cannot discover any traces of contrivance in the formation of an eye, will probably retain his atheism at the end of a whole system of physiology." Edin. Rev. vol. i. p. 289.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

SECT. I.

The Probability that some Account of the Creation would be revealed and preserved.

THE preceding survey of two out of the three accounts which have been at different times proposed to explain the phenomenon of an existing world, though brief and rapid, may be sufficient to make it appear, that neither its independent eternal existence, nor its fortuitous production, furnish any thing like a satisfactory solution of the problem. In particular, the undeniable appearance of innumerable instances of design throughout the universe in all its

עלייה. בלא נפה בדופן. אינה אוסרת. כמו כן נפה בדופן. בלא
נראה אדום בריאה, נ"כ אינה אוסרת. ומעתה. אם הקרומים בעצם
הסמוכים לנפה, לא האדימו, הרי אין רמז לפנים שגם ראוי שנעכר
הדם מחמת הנפה, שנבא לאסור מחמת שסוף העור של הקרומים ללקות
ולנעק. והרי זה. כמו שלא היינו מוצאין כלל נראה אדום בריאה. שלא
היינו אוסרין אז, מחמת הנפה שבדופן. והכ' דכותה. ופשוט.—
ואשר כתב הררי ונדיים בשבלת זהב. דאף אם האדימו הקרומים
מחמת הנפה, גם לדעת רבינו אפרים, אינו אלא ספק טריפה,
דבריו נאמנו נאמנו. דהא נעיר דעת רבינו אפרים ז"ל. הוא מסוגיא
ד' נו ע"ב. דמספקא לן, אם נדמיין עור הריאה, לעור שנפה שבדנים, או
לעור שאר שבדנים. ולה"כ אינו אוסר בנעכר הדם, אלא מחמת ספק, דילמא
לשנה שבדנים נדמיין לה. וכ"כ בלבושי שרד ס' לח ס"ק ז'. ואשר כתב
העתיק לשון התבואות שור. דאם יש נפה בדופן. והי' בריאה מדוגנות
רגלים לדבר בודאי שמחמת נפה הוא.— הוסיף כבודו ועשנו, בלשון
התבואות שור תיבת "בודאי". ולפנינו בתבואות שור, ליתא. אלא רגלים
לדבר שמחמת נפה הוא, ולשון רגלים לדבר. אינו לשון ודאי, אלא לשון
ספק. וכ"כ בלבושי שרד שם ס"ק ז'. ופשוט. ולה"כ כיון דרוב רבותינו
הראשונים ז"ל. גם בהאדימה הריאה ~~[illegible]~~ נגד נפה בדופן כשר.
ואף לדעת רבינו אפרים האוסר. אינו אוסר אלא מספק. אבל בנ"ד
שהאדמומית לא הי' רק בבשר הריאה, ולא בהקרומים. יש להקל
בזה ומעצה, כדעת הטוב טעם ודעת. ואין להחמיר בזה כלל.—
ב) עוד שאל, במורסא על נגלד בנוצה, אם יש לדמותה לבועא
על נגלד דטריפה.— וכבר הביא דעת המחנה חיים בזה. ודעת
המגלין בזה. ולענ"ד הדבר. נראה לכל באי שערי הלכות טריפות
הריאה. דברוב פעמים, בועא של מים זכים, ומורסא. דיניהם
שוה. ומעתה, גם בדין זה של מורסא על נגלד בנוצה, תלויא
בפלוגתת האחרונים ז"ל. בבועא של מים זכים, על נגלד בנוצה.

בעזה"י. יום תבר מזל. "באתי בדבריך" לפק. וולאזין.

להשואל הה' רבא ר' ... שוחר לדעת דבר ה' זו הלכה.
כ"ש ר' שלמה זלמן · ... נ"י.

הגיעני מכתבו. עם שלש שאלותיו. והנני להשיבו. על ראשון ראשון.
עד"ה המגור עם ספר תבוני זבח, בשם ספר העין שאלה. להורות
בדין אחד. את אשר לא נזכר בכל ספר העין שאלה, נר מבא
הגאון שליט"א. גם בעיני יפלא. ואשר תובה עלינו לדון את כל
אדם לכף זכות. ונלך היות, כי נמצא בעולם, עוד ספר אחר בשם
העין שאלה, לבד תבונן של נר מבא הגאון שו'. ולא כיון המחבר
כלל, לספר העין שאלה על השאלתות. ולא ראינו אינה ראי'. כי
בכל זה. יען כי נר מבא הגאון שליט"א, נמצא כעת באדעססא.
כתבתי אליו, ביום אתמול. שבאם המחבר הזה עודנו חי באדעססא.
ישאל מאתו. וישאלנו לדעת בשר דבר. ואם באמת כיון המחבר
לספרו של נר מבא הגאון שו'. ונכתוב על פניו רגה. —
עתה אשיבהו על סדר שאלותיו, אחת לאחת.
א') עד. נראה אדום בריאה, נגד מכה בדופן. ונקבו הקרומים. ונמצאו
הקרומים נקיים, ואינם אדומים. והאדמימות הי' רק בבשר. הלא
עיניו ראו, את המגור בס' טוב טעם ודעת להפתיר. דעלברחק. אין
האדמימות מחמת המכה, גדולה שלטה האדמימות בקרומי הריאה,
הקרובים יותר להמכה, מבשר הריאה. ויפה אמר. ואשר השיג על זה.
דכיון דאין הטריפות מצד עצם המראה, דהא נראה בעירה הוא
אלא מצד המכה שבדופן. וסוף הקרומים זקוקין. הלא כבר דברים
אלו אמורים עם הספר, בשו"ת ברכת יוסף. והובא בספר תבוני זבח
שם בקונטרו, ובספר מנחת יוסף החדש, ס"י ל"ח עיין ד"ה בו. ועיין
אות כ"ט. אבל אין זה טענה כלל. דהא כיון, שנראה אדום

parts, irreconcilable with our experience of accidental effect; and the existence of sentient beings, endued with a faculty of voluntary reflection and motion which does not belong to unorganized or mere vegetable matter; lead us insensibly to the only solution which remains to be adduced, the operation of an Immaterial Intelligent Creator. I proceed, therefore, to inquire more particularly into the evidence that may exist of such actual creation, in addition to the incidental probability arising from the undisputed existence of a world, and the difficulty of ascribing its existence to any other origin.

Now, it cannot be denied that this probability would be counterbalanced by a formidable objection on the opposite side, if, after the diligent inquiry which an inhabitant of the world might be expected to make concerning the formation of the globe to which he belongs, no records were found to have been left of its author, or original constitution. Suppose it granted, for the present, that a Creator exists; it is difficult to believe that such a world, and

such beings as it contains, were created without any definite or assignable object: that its intelligent inhabitants were summoned into life, and then immediately abandoned by their Maker, retaining no connexion with him, either during the short period of their earthly existence, or after it. But if we reject this idea, as inconsistent with all reasoning as to the probable operations of Divine intelligence; then it becomes natural and almost necessary to conclude that the Creator would leave some memorial of himself in a world, which, as forming a part in the comprehensive scheme of his providence, he beholds with regard and interest. It is evident, however, that as mankind alone, of all the inhabitants of the earth, are gifted with intelligence, mankind alone can hold any connexion with an intelligent Creator.* To them therefore we must look as the chief objects of creation, and as the depositaries with whom the records of it, supposing such an event to have

* Τίνος γὰρ ἄλλον ζώον ψυχὴ πρῶτα μὲν θεῶν, τῶν τὰ μέγιστα καὶ κάλλιστα συνταξάντων, ἥσθηται ὅτι εἰσὶ; τὶ δὲ φῦλον ἄλλο ἢ ἄνθρωποι θεοὺς θεραπεύουσι; Xen. Mem. l. 4. 13.

taken place, would be left, to be handed down by them from age to age.

A history, however, does exist, by consent of antiquity ascribed to Moses, the leader and lawgiver of the Jews, a very singular and ancient people; which relates, that at a certain period not extremely remote, (when compared with other conjectures,) our globe, and the system to which it belongs, was created by an Almighty and Invisible Agent, described by the author as God. All necessity of argument respecting the existence of a supreme Creator is of course precluded, if this history is admitted to be true. The Hebrew nation is there represented as enjoying proofs of the fact in question, which were denied to the rest of mankind. Their deliverance from Egypt, their subsequent wanderings, their battles, and ultimate establishment in Canaan, were accompanied by a series of divine interpositions which perpetually reminded them of their relation to a Creator.

A history like this, containing an account of

an event in which we are so intimately concerned; not only pretending to be, but undoubtedly being, the most ancient record that we know to exist, must interest every one who thinks it important to inquire whether the Creator has expressly revealed himself to the knowledge of mankind, or left the relation which they hold towards him to be discovered by the exercise of their reason. If the subject of such a history is transcendently important, its evidence has a proportionate claim to a full and impartial investigation, according to such ules as we are accustomed to apply to those other histories which furnish the only acquaintance we have with the events of former ages; so far at least as the subject of the history in question falls within the limits of human judgment and experience.

Of the truth of this history, we have all the proof which the nature of the case allows. The early periods with which it is concerned are involved in so much darkness, that even the annals of the powerful kingdoms of Assyria

and Egypt present chasms, in the first of thirty generations, in the latter of a thousand years, if we except the fabulous reign of Sesostris, and what is incidentally collected from Jewish records.* But the Jews, as a nation, were always in obscurity, the certain consequence not only of their situation, but of the peculiar constitution and jealous nature of their government. Can it then reasonably be expected, that we should obtain positive testimony concerning this small and insulated nation from foreign historians, when the most ancient of these, whose works remain, lived more than a thousand years posterior to Moses?† Can we look for it from the Greeks, when Thucydides has declared, that even respecting his own countrymen, he could procure no authentic record prior to the Trojan war? or from the Romans,

* Viz. from Ninyas to Sardanapalus; and in Egypt, from the invasion of the Shepherds, 2000, to Amosis, 1040, before Christ.

† So Clemens Alexandrinus sarcastically but justly observes, Καὶ ΘΕΩΝ ἄρα τῶν πλείστων παρ' Ἕλλησιν, οὐ μόνον τῶν λεγομένων σοφῶν· καὶ ποιητῶν, ὁ Μωσῆς πρεσβύτερος. L. l. Strom. p. 323.

who had scarcely begun to be a people, when the empire of Jerusalem was destroyed, and the whole nation reduced to captivity?

In the mean time, however, exactly such collateral testimony *is* preserved as the nature of the case allows, in which, as it has appeared, there is not even the possibility of positive confirmation. For instance, the Mosaic account of the deluge,* and the escape of the ark with a single family, is so extraordinary, that we might expect it to be commemorated by tradition; and this traditional evidence is found at large in Berosus and Plutarch; and researches into ancient mythology abundantly prove the existence of such records as we might naturally look for, disguised under the mistaken worship, and images, and symbols of idolatry.† It was probable, also,

* It is as falsely as boldly remarked by Bolingbroke, "that the tradition of Noah's deluge is vouched by no other authority than that of Moses, and that the memory of that catastrophe was known only to one people, and preserved in one corner of the earth." Vol. iii. p. 224.

† I allude to Mr. Bryant's learned work on this subject.

that the dispersion from Babel would be preserved in memory, by the descendants of those persons who set out from thence to people the world; and in fact it has been preserved in traditional fables, and may be clearly traced in profane writers, through the veil of poetical imagery. It may be traced still more indisputably in the three separate and primitive languages, which still, as we are assured by the most competent witness the world has yet heard

The first head of his argument is thus summed up by Sir W. Jones, Asiat. Res. iii. 487. "If the deluge really happened at the time recorded by Moses, those nations, whose monuments are preserved, and writings accessible, must have retained memorials of an event so stupendous; and in fact, they have retained such memorials. The reasoning seems just, and the fact is true, beyond controversy." See also Faber, Horæ Mosaicæ, chap, iv. Mr. Mitford's testimony is to the same effect: "The traditions of all nations, and appearances in every country, bear witness, scarcely less explicit than the writings of Moses, to that general flood, which nearly destroyed the whole human race; and the ablest Greek authors, who have attempted to trace the history of mankind to its source, all refer to such an event for the beginning of the present system of things on earth." Hist. of Greece, ch. i. sect. 1.

upon this subject, attest the gradual replenishment of the world from the progeny of Shem, Ham, and Japhet.*

Besides these coincidences, which might be greatly extended, it is remarkable, that the farther we can go back in history, the nearer approach we find to the pure worship of the Creator,† and the more closely our accounts of the creation agree with that of Moses. Recent acquaintance with the ancient literature of India has furnished memorials of many of the events recorded in Genesis, expressed by symbols very nearly similar. The Hindus, in particular, have allotted an entire Purana to the detail of the deluge.‡ The account of the oldest historian, Sanchoniatho, so far as its obscurity has been pierced by the ingenious labours of those who have considered it as im-

* Sir W. Jones on the Origin of Nations, Asiat. Res. vol. iii.

† See Leland, advantages of Revelation, chap. xi. : and Shuckford's Connexion, vol. i. p. 304.

‡ Asiat. Res. vol. iii.

portant, relates the Phœnician tradition of a history, agreeing in its chronology and genealogy with that of Moses. The records likewise of Eratosthenes, succeeding those of Sanchoniatho, give a series of profane history, from the first man to the first Olympiad, agreeing with the Scriptures.* Many remaining fragments of early historians, though in the circumstances involving various degrees of truth and error, according to the different opportunites of information possessed by their authors, unite in corroborating the main facts of the sojourning of the Jews in Egypt, of their sudden departure, and final settlement in Syria.†

Whatever may be thought the value of this

* Cumberland's Preface to Sanchoniatho.

† Strabo, and Tacitus, 1. 5. Hist. The various corroborations of Jewish history from heathen authors are collected by Josephus, contra Apion: Eusebius, Præpar. Evang.; Stillingfleet, in his Origines Sacræ; Gale's Court of the Gentiles; Stackhouse's Preparatory Discourse, &c. &c: more recently, and with the additions which our acquaintance with America and India has furnished, by Faber, Horæ Mosaicæ, vol. i.

corroborating testimony, it must be remembered, that the circumstances of the case admit of no other. The evidence may be less than we desire; it may be insufficient:—but it is not defective. Nothing is wanting, which we can justly expect or demand.

The events of the Hebrew history, however, as related by their own historians, involve a series of miraculous interferences, of which there is no other example; and miracles, we are told, being repugnant to our experience, cannot be proved to the satisfaction of reason, or, at least, should not be received "entirely and solely on affirmation, the affirmation of the Jews."* I should readily admit, that the more any event is out of the regular course of nature, the stronger is the evidence required to induce a rational belief of it. But it may be affirmed on the other hand, that the principal facts recorded by Moses, have more testimony, historical or moral, positive or collateral, in their

* Bolingbroke, Philos. Works, vol. v. p. 538.

favour, than any other events in the annals of the world.

To avoid altogether objections like that of Bolingbroke, arising from the questionable authority of the Hebrew historians, I shall be contented with appealing to the INTERNAL EVIDENCE of the Hebrew law and civil polity; which, if it proves, as I think it does, to a moral certainty, that Moses acted under a divine commission, is a species of evidence which precludes all similar cavil, and is in great measure independent of external testimony.

But, before we enter more particularly on the proofs which appear to me to confirm the divine origin of the Mosaic law, it will be necessary to clear up some questions that meet us in the outset, respecting the nature of the history attached to it, and the sources from whence it may be derived.

First, as to the nature of the history, it has not been unusual for some real and some pretended

friends of Revelation, startled at the difficulties which seem to oppose them in the early chapters of Genesis,* (difficulties, it must be remembered, which are commonly magnified to support their hypothesis,) to give an allegorical interpretation to those parts of Scripture which they cannot be persuaded to understand literally. Many passages of this tendency from the Fathers are quoted by Middleton in his short essay upon this subject, in which he seems inclined to give more weight to that ancient authority, than he was accustomed to allow when it interfered with his own argument. "It was not the intention of Moses," Eusebius says,† "to detail a philosophical account of the formation of the world, but to signify only that it did not exist of itself or by chance, but was the production of an all-wise and all-powerful Creator." To the same purpose Cyril, in reply to the scoffs of Julian,‡ declares, "that Moses's view was to accommodate his story to the igno-

* See Appendix to this volume, Nos. I. and II.

† Oracles of Reason, l. 4, p. 186. Euseb. Præp. Ev. 2. 7.

‡ Jul. p 50 ed. Lips.

rance of the Jews." Origen concurs with Philo in a similar opinon, which will not surprise those who are aware that the Fathers were, generally speaking, as bad reasoners, as they were pious and sincere Christians.*

It will hereafter appear, that the arguments I shall propose will be very little affected by the decision of this question. At the same time I would premise, since it is a subject upon which the Fathers had no clearer means of judging than ourselves, that two unanswerable reasons must prevent us, however pressed with difficulties, from resorting to this explanation of them. First, these passages are referred to in other parts of Scripture, as of historical authority.† Secondly, it would seem altogether unjustifiable in an author professing to relate matters of fact, and to sanction, on their authority, his legislative character, to introduce allegory into the most important subject of his

* Or. Philocal. c. i p. 12, 13. See also Josephus, Procem. ad Antiq.

† 2 Cor. xi. 3. 1 Tim. ii. 14.

narration.* My inquiry, therefore, supposes the Mosaic account to contain not allegory, but fact:—fact, of which Moses derived his knowledge, either from inspiration delivered immediately to himself, or from information originally revealed and preserved from the earliest times, and afterwards incorporated with the Hebrew law by the divine direction.

In respect to the original communication between the Deity and his newly-formed creature, man, I have already hinted at those moral reasons which render such a communication probable: other circumstances seem to point out its absolute necessity.

First, it has been imagined by some of those who have turned their thoughts to the theory of language, that the use of intelligible speech was a human invention, first suggested by the

* Sir W. Jones saw this in a strong light. "Either the first eleven chapters of Genesis," he says (all due allowance being made for an Eastern style) "are true, or the whole fabric of our national religion is false." As. Res. i. 225.

wants, and afterwards improved by the experience of mankind.* It was the aim of Dr. Smith's most agreeable Treatise upon this subject, to show how "savages who had never been taught to speak, would begin to form a language by which they might make their mutual wants intelligible to each other, by uttering certain sounds, whenever they meant to denote certain objects." Modern observations, however, have proved with sufficient certainty that speech is purely imitative, and that men would have remained without the power of communicating their sentiments, as long as they remained without the means of instruction. It is well known that those, who, with their organs of speech perfect have been unfortunately deaf from their birth, are never brought to utter articulate sounds by any efforts of their own; but, if taught at all to do so, effect it by imitating the motion of the lips in others. Whoever has watched the progress of speech

* Voltaire, Condillac, l'Abbé de Brosses, &c. The authorities on both sides have been studiously collected by Archb. Magee on Atonement, vol. ii.

in children, will have found that it is not dependent upon the gradual enlargement of their ideas, since they always understand much more than they can express; but upon the facility, acquired by degrees, of adapting the organs of speech to the expression of certain sounds. A child which first begins to join words together, shows manifestly, by its slow, imperfect, and abrupt articulation, wherein the difficulty lies; and the knowledge recently obtained from the benevolent exertions of the Abbé Sicard, in France, has placed this matter beyond all reasonable doubt.*

In fact, the difficulties which embarrass the believers in the human invention of language, may be imagined from the acknowledgment of the Abbé de Brosses, who examined the subject most profoundly, and with a sufficient at-

* See an interesting account in Yorke's Letters from France, 1804. In the school of that philanthropist was a girl of seventeen, who, having lost her hearing at six years of age, had a vocabulary of such words and ideas as could be attained by that time of life, but no farther.

tachment to his own system. He confesses that men must have existed for a long time, must have acquired general ideas, nay, must have formed themselves into societies, and have undertaken designs in common, *before* they learnt to transpose inarticulate sounds and cries, expressive of joy, fear, their passions, and their wishes, into regular words. Now, with regard to general ideas, it is agreed by the soundest metaphysicians, not only that they could not originally have been framed, but that they can never become the subject of our conception, otherwise than through the medium of the terms in which they are expressed. "Whether it might have been possible," says Mr. Stewart, "for the Deity to have so formed us, that we might have been capable of reasoning concerning classes of objects without the use of signs, I shall not take upon me to determine. But this we may venture to affirm with confidence, that man is not such a being."* And surely nothing is incredible, if it be not incredible that men could have

* Elements, vol. i. chap. 4. s. 3.

agreed upon a mode of civil polity, or undertaken works in common, without any expressive medium of communication.* So that it approaches as high a degree of certainty as is consistent with the nature of the case, that man was originally indebted to his Creator, not only for the organs of speech, but also for the power of using them.

Secondly, the slow degrees by which mankind, when left to the progress of their own experience, are found to attain any of the arts which contribute to the ornament and comfort of civilized life, render it probable that in this instance also they were not unassisted by their Creator. The barbarous state of the inhabitants of countries newly discovered, their general ignorance of arts and deficiency in morals, have naturally introduced a vague idea that man

* It is curious to find Rousseau (Inég. des Hommes) attempting to explain the origin of language; till at last he confesses himself "convaincu de l'impossibilité, presque demonstrée, que les langues aient pu naître, et s'établir par des moyens purement humains."

was originally, at his birth or creation, a savage. But, according to the Mosaic account, which agrees too with the suggestions of reason as to the probable operations of a wise and benevolent Creator, this savage state was not the primitive state of man. Even among the grandsons of Adam, we are told not only of the use of brass and iron, but of the division of labour into separate branches; we read not only of the arts which support life, but of those which contribute to amuse and refine it, the harp and the organ. When we consider in how rude a state, compared with this, the Mexicans and Peruvians were found, though they had belonged for some centuries to a settled and populous community, we shall have reason on our side in concluding that mankind were not at first abandoned altogether to their own ingenuity in the gradual invention of useful arts; and that many of them, under various circumstances of situation and climate, sunk at different periods into a barbarism to which they were not originally created.

Thirdly, following the gradual progress of

improvement, Adam and his posterity would have been hunters, supported by the produce of the chase, till their increase of numbers forced them first to the more regular occupation of shepherds, and afterwards, still farther, to the higher improvements of agriculture.* But one of the earliest occurrences related by Moses, represents the occupations of a shepherd and a husbandman not only as known, but as placed in separate hands. "Abel was a "keeper of sheep, and Cain was a tiller of the "ground."† If events had been left to their natural course, their progress would have been the same in primitive, as in later times. Nor is it any answer to this argument, to turn its force against the truth of the history itself. If Moses had imposed a forgery upon the world, he would have studied its probability, by following the regular and acknowledged course of improvement by purely human means. So that we here seem to have obtained an additional, though indirect proof, both of his veracity, and

* Smith, Wealth of Nations, b. 5. c. 1. † Gen. chap. iv.

of the Creator's interference for the good of his creatures.

Indeed, it can only be ascribed to want of due reflection upon the difficulties which oppose the other alternative, that we hear such interference rejected by many, who would strenuously maintain the divine agency in every part of the creation. If it is a proof of benevolent wisdom, that the minutest insect is provided with the means of attaining its sustenance, and with the instinct necessary for its preservation, why would it not be equally a part of wisdom to guard against the comparatively slow operation of human reason, by anticipating its results, and providing mankind with that instruction at which their natural powers would enable them very gradually to arrive? If it is worthy of God to have created man, why should it be held unworthy of him, to have enabled his creature to perform at once the highest purposes of his being?

Concerning the mode in which these neces-

sary interpositions may have taken place, it would be idle to offer opinions or form conjectures. It is sufficient to observe here, that it has in all ages appeared agreeable to reason, to suppose a race of beings in the intermediate state between man and his Creator.* Scripture, though by no means full or explicit on a subject which is to us merely matter of speculative inquiry, is not however silent: but occasionally speaks of such superior beings, employed in ministering between God and his creatures upon earth.† And through their means doubtless we are to understand those communications to have been made, which the early chapters of Genesis are employed in representing.

The events there recorded, partly thus revealed, as we must necessarily allow, to Adam,

* The δαιμονες of many of the ancient philosophers. Locke, l. 3. chap. xii. s. 6.

† Nehemiah ix. 6; Luke ii. 15, xv. 10, &c. &c.; and particularly, as connected with their supposed office, Heb. i. 14; Matt. xviii. 10; Acts xii.; Eccl. v. 6; Tobit xii. 12.

and partly remembered, would be communicated by him to his children, and probably rehearsed and commemorated on certain days, set apart for sacred purposes.* They would be preserved by traditional, if not by written history, beyond the deluge; and at that time the length of human life rendered tradition both easy and secure. Noah had lived some hundred years with thousands of persons who had conversed with Adam. Abraham lived with Shem, the son of Noah. "So that from Adam unto Abraham, is, comparatively speaking, no greater length even for tradition than from our father's grandfather to ourselves."† Joseph, the

* That the observation of the Sabbath formed part of the patriarchal religion, seems probable from the *past tense* used in the fourth commandment, The Lord *blessed* the seventh day, and *set* it apart, or *hallowed* it; and from the double portion of manna provided on the sixth day, *previous* to the giving of the law. Exod. xvi. See Horsley, Serm, xxii.

† Bishop Wilson from Isidore. See Shuckford's Connexion. Allix on Genesis, chap. xvii. "From Adam to Noah there is but one man, viz. Methuselah, who joined hands with both. From Noah to Abraham, but one, viz. Shem, who saw them both for a considerable time. From Abraham to Joseph, but one, viz. Isaac, Joseph's grandfather. From

great-grandson of Abraham, lived to see his children and his children's children. Besides, it is extremely probable that a surer mode of conveying information than even such simple tradition was not unknown to the antediluvian patriarchs. What we learn of those times from the only history that exists of them, by no means leads us to suppose that mankind were ignorant of letters, or in any respect rude and uncivilized. However this may be, the most important of those ancient records, in whatever way preserved, would naturally be selected by Moses for the information of future ages; so that, after the original revelation declaring the creation of the world, there would appear no necessity for interposing farther any extraordinary degree of immediate inspiration.

It seems, therefore, that there is nothing either impossible, or improbable, in the idea that the history of Moses was founded upon original re-

Joseph to Moses, but one, Amron, who might have seen Joseph long. These *characters of time* Moses has carefully observed."

velation. To preserve among the Hebrews a knowledge of the principal event there recorded, viz. the creation of the world, the Mosaic law, and the civil government of that people, are declared to have been expressly instituted by the command of God himself. I shall endeavour to show particularly that this was no vain pretension; and confine my proofs to the internal evidence arising out of the nature of the law, and the character it impressed upon the people who lived under that peculiar administration.

SECTION II.

The Object of the Hebrew Polity was to maintain the Worship of a Creator.

The Hebrew nation, when viewed in contrast with the rest of the ancient world, presents a spectacle not less remarkable for the pure simplicity of its theology, than for the singularity of its political constitution. The familiarity with their history, which we acquire in early infancy, weakens the force of the impression which the annals and civil government of the Hebrews must infallibly excite in a philosophical mind, if the account of them were conveyed to us at a period of maturer judgment, and viewed in sober comparison with the other records of antiquity. From the midst of darkness, error, and dispute; from a scene of licentious worship and degrading superstitions, we turn to an unhesi-

tating faith, and a sublime devotion: all around is a desert, a wilderness and gloom; from the centre of which, the Hebrew polity rises before us, set up like a pillar to record the creation of the world, and the God who demands the homage of his creatures.

This, in fact, was the declared intention of that polity. It is founded expressly on the principle, that, in the beginning of the system to which the human race belongs, the world was created by one independent Being; who had selected the Hebrews to commemorate the original of the universe, and to perpetuate the important truth, that its Author, seen only by his works, is to be worshipped without material or visible representation, as the Creator and Governor of the world.

To prove that the main object of the consecration of the Hebrews, was to perpetuate the records of the creation,* we need go no further

* I am not unmindful of the ulterior purpose accomplished by the separation of the Hebrews, as preparing the way for

than the decalogue.* The laws of the first table assert the existence and unity of God; declare the reverence in which his name is to be held; and refute the belief, and condemn the practice, of those nations who think that he, the Creator, can be properly represented under any visible form taken from the things he has made. Blessings are promised to the Hebrews, if they adhere to his prescribed worship; and severe punishment is entailed upon them, if they abjure his authority, and prove unfaithful to the trust reposed in them.

These declarations are followed up by a law, appointing one day in seven for the worship of God, and specifying the reason of that appropriation. It ordains, that as the work of the creation, as detailed in Genesis, employed six successive days, so six successive days should be

the coming of the Messiah: nor of the additional confirmation which this law derives from the fact of its being a preparatory dispensation. But to have insisted farther upon this would have carried the argument into too wide a field: and the object here stated, is borne on the face of the law.

* Exodus xxxi. 12, &c.

allotted by the people who possessed the history of the creation, to the ordinary labours and business of life; but that every seventh day should be set apart and distinguished from the rest, should be employed in no secular avocations, but held sacred for the commemoration of that great event, and of the day when the Creator having seen the world fit for the reception and support of the creatures to whose use it was destined, ordered them to increase and multiply, and enjoy their goodly habitation.

This regular return of a season, on which all their usual employments were to be exchanged for devotion, was appointed, say the Jews themselves,* "that, having no other business, they might fasten in their minds *the belief, that the world had a beginning;* which is a thread that draws after it all the foundations of the law, or the principles of religion." For, we should mistake in imagining, that the division of time into working days and Sabbaths, was intended

* R. Levi of Barcelona; quoted by Patrick on Exodus xix.

merely to secure a certain portion of the year to the worship of the Deity. If that were all, why every seventh, rather than every tenth or fifth day, or, than any fifty days in the year?* But we find in this appointment a perpetual memorial of the reason why the Deity requires our worship: namely, as the Creator of the world. It is not only prescribed, that a seventh part of life should be appropriated to religious duties, but it is especially provided that the reason of such appropriation should be borne perpetually in mind. "*For*, *in six days* the "Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all "that in them is, and *rested the seventh day*; "*therefore* the Lord blessed the seventh day,

* "That men should assemble at stated seasons for the public worship of God, all must perceive to be a duty who acknowledge that a creature endowed with the high faculties of reason and intelligence, owes to his Maker public expressions of homage and adoration; but that the assembly should recur every seventh, rather than every sixth, or every eighth day, no natural sanctity of the seventh, more than of the sixth, or eighth, persuades. By keeping *one* day in *seven*, we protest against idolatry, and acknowledge that God who in the beginning made the heavens and earth." See Horsley's excellent Sermons on the Obligation of the Sabbath.

"and hallowed it:" *therefore*, that particular day shall you consecrate to God, and distinguish it by rest from labour, as it was originally signalized by the cessation of the visible and immediate exercise of the Creator's power.

This particular object of the solemnization of the Sabbath is repeated, and explicitly assigned, in a subsequent communication. "The Lord "spake unto Moses, saying, *Verily, my Sab-* "*baths shall ye keep, It is a sign between me* "*and the children of Israel for ever; for in six* "*days the Lord made heaven and earth, and* "*on the seventh day he rested.*"* And it may be worth remarking, that the modern Jews have preserved the original reason of the consecration of the day, in the grace they use on the Sabbath: "Blessed be thou, O God our Lord, King of the world, who hast sanctified us by thy commandments, and given us thy holy Sabbath; and of thy good will and pleasure hast left it to us an inheritance, *the memorial of thy works of creation.*"†

* Exod. xxxi. † Patrick.

It is not our concern to inquire, why the descendants of Abraham were made the chosen depositaries of a fact, miraculously preserved in their knowledge, respecting which the rest of mankind, through so many ages, were left to the darkness in which their original apostasy had involved them. This is among " the secret " things which belong to God ;" and is lost in a train of counsels, which we are not taught to penetrate. Their positive selection, however, for this purpose, and that they might become, as it has been well observed, a standing confutation of idolatry, is declared with undoubted clearness, and repeated with a solemnity suited to the occasion. When they had reached Mount Sinai, " the Lord called unto Moses out of the " mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the " house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel ; " Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, " and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and " brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, " if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my " covenant, then ye shall be a *peculiar treasure* " *unto me above all people : for, all the earth is*

"*mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom*
"*of priests and an holy nation.*" * The same idea pervades the law, and is given as a reason for many special statutes. It is again enforced, when the Hebrews, having nearly traversed the wilderness, were upon the point of entering the Holy Land. "Now, hearken, O Israel. Be-
"hold, I have taught you statutes and judgments,
"even as the Lord my God commanded me;
"keep, therefore, and do them; for this is your
"wisdom and your understanding in the sight
"of the nations, which shall hear all these
"statutes and say, Surely this great nation is a
"wise and understanding people. *For what*
"*nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh*
"*unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things*
"*that we call upon him for?*"—"*Thou hast*
"*avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and*
"*to walk in his ways, and keep his statutes: and*
"*the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his*
"*peculiar people*, as he hath promised thee, and
"that thou shouldest keep all his command-
"ments; and to make thee high above all

* Exodus xix. 3.

" nations which he hath made, in praise, and " in name, and in honour : and that thou mayest " be an *holy people unto the Lord thy God*, as " he hath spoken." *

The original covenant is farther renewed in very solemn terms by Joshua in a general assembly of the people, when he found his end approaching. After recounting the special selection they enjoyed, and the special assistance they had received, he calls upon them to declare, whether they will take upon themselves their part of the covenant, and bind themselves individually to obey those laws which marked their appropriation. " If it seem evil unto you to " serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye " will serve, whether the gods which your fa- " thers served, that were on the other side of " the flood, or the gods of the Ammonites, in " whose land ye dwell? but, as for me and my " house, we will serve the Lord. And the " people answered and said, God forbid that we " should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods :

* Deut. xvi. 17.

"*for the Lord our God, he it is that brought*
"*us up, and our fathers, out of the land of Egypt;*
"*therefore will we also serve the Lord, for he is*
"*our God.*"*

Four hundred years after, we find the dying admonition of David to the same effect, leaving it as his last injunction to his son: "*Keep the*
"*charge of the Lord thy God,* to walk in his
"ways, to keep his statutes, and his command-
"ments, and his judgments, and his testimonies,
"*as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou*
"*mayest prosper in all thou doest, and whither-*
"*soever thou turnest thyself.*"*

But it is unnecessary to specify particular passages. The universal language of the law, and of the magistrates who from time to time enforce its observance, always tends to the same point of diffusing and maintaining a general belief in God as the Creator and moral Governor of the world, and a particular belief that he had selected the family of Abraham for his peculiar service.

* Josh. xxiv. † 1 Kings xi. 3.

Such was the design of the Hebrew polity. Whatever was its *origin*, its professed *object* was undeniably to render its members living testimonies of the existence of one God, the Creator of the world. The only inquiry therefore is respecting its origin. Had Moses, its founder, any other light upon the subject than the light of reason? Did he, of his own purpose, appoint a polity, and institute a civil government, to honour the Creator, and commemorate the creation: or, had he divine commission to perpetuate the records of this fact among the Israelites; and had they themselves such undoubted evidence of this commission, as induced them to receive him as their legislator, and submit to the authority of his laws? That they had this evidence, I shall endeavour to prove. For, though the miracles in question, being contrary to the course of nature, cannot, we are told, be received as true, on the testimony of the Jews alone; yet, in weighing the internal evidence of the law we are subject to no imposition. That a commonwealth really existed, of which God, the Creator of the world, was acknowledged as the founder and

protector; that it abounded in laws providing for his worship, and guarding against the idolatry of other nations; are facts, upon which there is no doubt, and there can be no dispute. Neither do I despair of showing that the existence of such a polity as that of the Hebrews, is in itself a complete proof of the fact which it professes to record.

SECTION III.

Peculiar object of the Hebrew Polity.

THE leading object of the Hebrew polity being evidently the worship of one God, as the Creator; it becomes reasonable to inquire how this speculative truth happened to be made the leading object of civil government; or how Moses alone, of all legislators, came to select this article of faith as the foundation-stone of his legislation.

We must descend of course from all high pretensions, and place Moses on a level with Minos or Lycurgus, with Solon or Numa, with Zaleucus or Charondas.* Let them stand on the same

* Josephus, in the opening of the Jewish Antiquities, speaking of Moses, might be thought to countenance the idea of his being a human legislator; and any person reading *his*

footing with respect to their opportunities, and how shall we account for the extraordinary difference which appears in the conduct of the lawgivers, and the nature of their laws? One of the two principal tables of the Mosaic code is solely occupied in providing for the right belief and exclusive adoration of the Creator. A great proportion of the other statutes relate to the mode in which he is to be worshipped. He is declared in a peculiar manner the king or head of the state. A departure from the established belief, and a refusal to worship God under the character assigned to him in the law, is considered as treason, and punished as the most heinous crime. Not to dwell too long on matters that cannot be disputed, it must be obvious, to any one who reads the Hebrew laws, that they all refer directly or indirectly to God, as the actual Governor of that people: that the lawgiver seems to think he shall have done all that he need be anxious to effect, if he can establish

account of Moses receiving the law, might compare it with the case of Numa or Mahomet. This is to be attributed to the compromising spirit in which Josephus wrote his History.

this belief; and that the whole community professes to have no other bond of union than its sacred observance.

Now, there is no doubt, that the profoundest inquiries of reason terminate in the belief of one God, as inculcated by Moses. But it is notorious, and will be seen hereafter more particularly, that reason did not succeed in ascertaining this fact generally throughout the ancient world. That Moses then alone, without any advantage denied to others, should penetrate the mists of ignorance, or, which are still more perplexing, the mazes of error; and apprehend the Creator, and the spiritual worship which is due to an immaterial Being; nay, farther, that, not contented with satisfying his own mind of this rational belief, he should fix upon this point as the basis of his legislation, and the cement of his civil polity; is a notion too improbable to be received, even with any common authority in its favour; how much more then is it absurd to embrace it, in direct contradiction to the only evidence we possess concern-

ing the establishment of the Hebrew government?

It is true, indeed, that I may be here met by an objection to this effect: that Moses, considered as a mere political legislator, and consulting of course the welfare of his people and the observance of his laws, would naturally be led to prefix to his legislative code, a history, declaring the dependance of mankind upon a Creator. I am ready to acknowledge that such was the practice of antiquity. It appears, not only in the philosophical treatises of Plato and Cicero,* but still more explicitly in the preamble to the laws of Zaleucus,† legislator of the Locrians. All lawgivers have been convinced of the insufficiency of any sanctions which

* Cic. de Leg. ii. 6.

† Diod. Siculus, l. 12. "The first step which the legislator took," says Warburton, Div. Leg. ii. 2, "was to pretend an extraordinary revelation from some god, by whose command and direction he framed the laws he would establish." Bolingbroke, who takes this ground, instances Zoroaster, Hostanes, the Magi, Pythagoras, and Numa.

they can employ, to obtain effectually their object of encouraging virtue and repressing vice, without a resort to some such principle of universal obligation, as the dread of present divine vengeance, or future punishment, affords. All have been convinced that the existence in their society of a strong practical sense of divine government, is more valuable towards restraining those disorders which endanger the peace of a community, than the most despotic authority or the severest punishments. Thus much is willingly granted.

But it will set this point in a truer light, if we refer to the legislators of antiquity, acting in pursuance of these convictions, and making the benefit of their people their object in enforcing the belief of superior powers. The difference will appear to be this; that, among other nations, the divine worship was introduced for the sake of the civil polity; but that by the institutions of Moses, the civil polity was established for the sake of preserving the faith.

It is probably true, that no civilized com-

munity has ever existed without a sense of religion. That those ancient kingdoms, at least, with which we are best acquainted, lived under a consciousness of some divine power and government, is fully proved by their frequent sacrifices and vows and festivals. The belief from which these practices proceed, is so forcibly natural, that it continues to operate in superstition, where it is too far perverted to excite devotion. But the constitution of the Hebrew polity is all along accompanied not by such vague belief alone, but by a continued and superintending sense of divine direction. It places religion as the foundation of the whole edifice; which in other communities has been only added as a prop to the building.

It is impossible to survey the books of Jewish law at the same time with the codes of other legislators, without an irresistible conviction of the difference which I am here remarking. Look at the laws of Lycurgus, as they are detailed at length by Xenophon, an author who cannot reasonably be suspected of omissions in

a subject of this nature. It is there observed, "that the emulation of young men in feats of agility and strength, is both agreeable to the gods and useful to the state; and that Lycurgus did not promulgate his edicts, till he had first inquired of the oracle whether his laws would benefit the community."* This is the only reference which is made to any superior power. With respect to Athens, Maximus Tyrius goes so far as to observe, that it would have been vain for Socrates to appeal to the people in defence of his innocence; for, how were the Athenians to understand what was the nature of virtue, or of the Deity, or how he should be worshipped; since these were not subjects into which the legislators inquired, nor had Solon or Draco laid down any laws respecting them.† Detached enactments, it is true, appear, recommending religious worship and sacrifice, both public and private:‡

* Pag. 184 and 199, ed. Simson.

† Diss. 39.

‡ The fragment of a law of Draco is preserved to this effect:— *Θεοὺς τιμᾶν, καὶ Ἥρωας ἐγχωρίους ἐν κόινῳ, ἑπομένος νόμοις πατρίοις, ἰδίᾳ κατὰ δύναμιν σὺν ἐνφημίᾳ καὶ ἀπάρχαις καρπων, καὶ πελάνοις ἐπετείοις.* Porph. de Abstin. l. iv.

but the real fact is, as the philosopher means to be understood, that these lawgivers left the opinions of their country untouched; or, at most, prescribed only the continuance of the customary religious rites; but to establish new ones, or to settle the popular faith on any solid or philosophical foundation, never became their object, or entered into their contemplation.

With regard to Rome we are more fully informed, and able to institute a pretty exact comparison. Dionysius* acquaints us, "that Romulus, *aware how much good laws and worthy pursuits contribute to the piety, order, morals, and free spirit of a political community, paid great attention to these matters*, beginning with the veneration due to the superior and inferior deities. He appointed, therefore, their sacrifices and altars, images, and statutes, commemorating the benefits which each had bestowed on mankind; prescribing the feasts which should be held to the several orders of gods, and what sort of honour and sacrifice they are respectively pleased with:

* Lib. ii. p. 9, Steph.

and instituting assemblies and festivals and days of remission from business, after the wisest customs of the Grecian states, but rejecting at the same time those mythological fables which seem unworthy of the nature of the gods; and taking especial care to admit none of those rites which had been perverted in other countries to the corruption of morals." Even the laudable anxiety, we may see, to avoid the impurities which attended the worship of Bacchus and Cybele, was inspired by a sense of the public welfare, not by zeal for the honour of the Deity.

Livy is no less explicit respecting the prevailing object in the mind of Numa, whose pretence to divine communication has so often been set in comparison with Moses. The temple of Janus, he says,* being closed, and peace being established with all the surrounding states; lest those minds which military discipline and the fear of the enemy had kept in order, should riot in the wantonness of leisure and security, *Numa thought it desirable that a sense and awe of the*

* Lib. i. 19.

divine power should be infused into them, a thing of the greatest efficacy among a rude and ignorant multitude: and with this in view he pretended to receive through the communications of Egeria those laws and rites which were most agreeable to the gods. The historian, after this preface, proceeds to describe how, by the appointment of priests and sacrifices, the minds of the people were at once occupied, and imbued with piety.

It is evident from these passages, that the institution of religious ceremonies at Rome was not the effect of belief, but of policy; * and it

* Ovid speaks of this as generally acknowledged:

Principio nimium promptos ad bella Quirites
Molliri placuit jure, Deûmque metu.
Inde datæ leges, ne firmior omnia posset,
Cæptaque sunt purè tradita sacra coli. FASTI.

Varro, in his books of antiquities, makes an express distinction between natural and civil theology; and confesses that his own judgment does not lead him to follow the religious institutions of the state; and that, if he were regulating a community de novo, he would institute gods and divine titles according to nature. It is remarkable, that he gives this reason for treating first upon human things, before he touches upon the divine:

naturally followed, that the religious worship was superstition, not devotion. How different this introduction of a state religion appears from the object so authoritatively professed by Moses, it would be superfluous to prove from particular instances. There is one God who created the world, who revealed himself to our forefathers and ourselves, who delivered us from slavery, who selected our nation to perpetuate his worship, who appointed us laws, who superintends our observance of them: this is the fundamental principle and the uniform language of the Hebrew code; a language acknowledged, as it every where appears, by the hearts of the people, even while their rebellious actions ceased to correspond with it. The fact is not merely, that a belief of the unity and power of the Creator existed among the Hebrews; but that on this

because *states existed first, and then instituted things relating to the gods;* just as a painter exists before his picture, or an architect before his building. Augustine very reasonably asks, "Naturale a civili velle discernere; quid est aliud, quàm ipsum civile fateri esse mendosum?" De Civit. Dei, lib. vi. s. 4, &c.

belief their whole civil government was raised. The fact is not merely, that God was worshipped by them as the common Father of all mankind; but he was esteemed their own immediate ruler and protector; the king of their nation, the author of the laws which bound them as individuals, and of the civil polity which united them as a community. The majority of the enactments of a voluminous ritual have the purity of his worship for their object. To him they looked for punishment of their violation of his commands, and for the rewards of their obedience. To him they referred their national as well as their personal prosperity. Each individual took home to himself the promise which concludes the code: "*If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of* "*the Lord thy God, to observe and do all his* "*commandments, blessed shalt thou be in the city,* "*and blessed shalt thou be in the field.*"* Under this impression they consented to observances so rigorous and so universally obligatory, as could only have been proposed by a lawgiver conscious

* Deut. xxviii. 3.

of his divine commission, to a people equally conscious of his supreme authority.

Undoubtedly it was common among the ancients to dedicate their cities to some particular deity, who was specially invoked in cases of public danger, and whose supposed office seems to have resembled that of St. Nicolas in the Greek church, and the various tutelar saints of the Romish calendar. Thus Athens was sacred to Minerva; Delos to Apollo: Ephesus to Diana; Argos to Juno. But we find nothing in the laws, nothing in the customs, nothing in the piety of these states, which can carry us one step farther in the comparison. Austerities are appointed by Lycurgus; but they are directed to the strength of the state. Austerities are enacted by Moses; but their object is the worship of the Creator. Where shall we look for an institution similar to that solemn ceremony among the Jews, by which the firstborn were sanctified to God? not only to preserve the memory of their deliverance from Egyptian tyranny, but to implant most strongly a sense of the duties of religion in the head of

every family. "*Thou shalt set apart unto the* "*Lord* all that openeth the matrix; the males "shall be the Lord's. And it shall be, when "thy son asketh thee in time to come, say- "ing, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, "By strength of hand *the Lord brought us out* "*from Egypt*, from the house of bondage; and it "shall be for a token upon thy head, and for "frontlets between thine eyes."* No room is left among these strict injunctions, for a distinction between natural and civil theology, as if the philosopher and the legislator had separate gods. Faith is treated as a moral duty, and as uniformly required from all, as temperance or justice. And to what cause can we ascribe this superiority, if we reject the one assigned by Josephus;† who observes, that the heathen lawgivers, not being acquainted, like Moses, with the true nature of God, and not defining any accurate knowledge of him, even as far as they had it in their power to attain it, for this reason established their communities after a different form.

* Exodus xiii. 12. † Contra Apion. p. 1386, ed. Huds.

The only exception to these remarks which can be urged from antiquity, or thought to bear the least comparison with the language of the Mosaic code, occurs in the preamble to the laws of Zaleucus; who shows an evident anxiety to introduce a philosophical belief in the existence of the gods, excited indeed by a view of the public welfare, but still far more explicit than we find elsewhere. In the preface which opens his system, he laid down,* " that first of all it is necessary for the inhabitants of a state to be persuaded and believe the existence of divine beings: that this *belief must arise from a contemplation of the heavens, and the universe, and their order and arrangement, which cannot be the work of chance, or man:* therefore that the gods should be worshipped and honoured, as the authors of all our real blessings. Let each individual there-

* See Diod. Sic. l. 12, p. 84; Rhod. 300, Steph.; and Stobæus, Serm. 42 and 37. The proœm of Charondas, who gave laws to the people of Catana, &c. is in the same spirit, but more concise: Τὼς βουλομένως καὶ πράττοντὰς τι, ἀπὸ θεῶν ἄρχεσθαι χρὴ—τὸ γὰρ ἄριστον, τὸν θεὸν εἶμεν ἄιτιον πάντων τουτῶν· ἔτι δὲ φάυλων πραξέων ἀπέχεσθαι, καὶ μάλιστα διὰ τὰν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν συμβουλίαν· οὔδενος γὰρ ἀδίκου θεὸν κοινωνεῖν.

fore cleanse his mind from every kind of pollution; and labour to be virtuous according to his power, in thought and deed, as he wishes to render himself acceptable to the gods: but should the evil dæmon haunt him, exciting him to wickedness, let him resort to the temples and altars, and there entreat the gods to deliver him from sin, the worst and most relentless of tyrants."

The spirit of this passage has been deservedly admired.* But there is an obvious difference between the tone of the Locrian and that of the Hebrew lawgiver. If their conclusion is the same, there is no resemblance between the steps by which they arrive at it. Zaleuccus anxiously impresses as a political consideration, what Moses simply relates as a known historical fact. Moses declares a naked truth, to which he foresees no dissent among his hearers: In the begin-

* See Hume, Nat. Hist. of Relig.; Warb. Div. Leg. ii. s. 3. I have no concern with the controversy as to the authenticity of these remains, in which Warburton maintains his ground with equal skill, learning, and ingenuity against the criticism of Bentley. It is enough for the argument here, that the preface, at least, was considered ancient in the time of Cicero.

ning, *God created the heaven and the earth :* and, *I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other Gods but me,* Zaleucus, on the contrary, enforces by argument, and by reference to the signs of order in the world, a point which need not have been proved, if it had not been disputed. The positive language of authority which Moses employs, is not the language assumed by one who introduces a new and unacknowledged principle, devised by his own reason. The certain confidence with which he broadly and at once asserts the fact, that in the beginning God created the world, can only arise from a consciousness that this fact required no proof in the minds of the people to whom it was addressed, but would receive the immediate assent of the whole Hebrew nation.*

* Plato, who imitated the Pythagorean lawgivers, and Cicero, who imitated Plato, both concur in proving the truth systematically, which they wish to be generally believed. The latter argues, " Quid est verius, quàm neminem esse oportere tam stultè arrogantem, ut in se rationem et mentem putet inesse, in cœlo mundoque non putet? aut ut ea, quæ vix summâ ingenii ratione comprehendat, nullâ ratione moveri putet?" Then, by the conclusion which he deduces, he betrays

I think it must be evident from these actual comparisons, that there is no similarity between the tone of Moses, and that of other lawgivers placed in his supposed circumstances: but that the distinction really exists which was at first remarked; viz. that they, for political purposes, introduced into their laws religious considerations; while the Hebrew government has chiefly and almost alone in view, the maintenance of the belief and worship of the Creator.

It still, however, remains to be observed, that Moses not only betrays no hesitation himself, and supposes no doubt on the part of the people, but he addresses them in terms which are quite unaccountable on the supposition of his not being borne out by facts, and his hearers' personal conviction of their truth. He

the political interest which inclines him to establish the existence of superior powers: "*Utiles esse opiniones has,* quis neget; cum intelligat quàm multa firmentur jurejurando, quantæ salutis sint fœderum religiones! quàm multos divini supplicii metus a scelere revocarit! quamque sancta sit societas civium inter ipsos, Diis immortalibus interpositis tum judicibus, tum testibus?" De Leg. ii. 7.

called all Israel, and said unto them, " Hear, " O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I " speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn " them, and keep them, and do them. The " Lord our God made a covenant with us in " Horeb. *The Lord made not this covenant with* " *our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of* " *us here alive this day. The Lord talked with* " *you face to face* out of the midst of the fire, and " ye said, Behold, the Lord our God has showed " his glory and his greatness, and *we have heard* " *his voice* out of the midst of the fire."* These appeals to their own knowledge of the divine origin of their law, are frequently and confidently made. So are they likewise, to the experience they had felt of the miraculous protection which God bestowed upon them, as a kingdom of priests and an holy nation, whom he had borne from Egypt " on eagles' wings."† The remembrance of this deliverance was to be handed down to posterity, as an imperishable fact. " When thy son asketh thee in time to come, " What mean these statutes, and testimonies, and

* Deut. v. 1. † Exodus xix.

"judgments, which the Lord our God hath "commanded you; then thou shalt say unto "thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, "and the Lord brought us out from Egypt with "a mighty hand: and the Lord showed signs "and wonders, great and sore, upon Pharaoh, "and upon all his household, *before our eyes;* "and the Lord commanded us to do all these "statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our "good always, that he might preserve us alive, "as it is at this day."*

In the same manner their former experience is appealed to, for the purpose of allaying an apprehension which might seem at first sight very natural: "If thou shalt say in thine heart, "These nations are more than I, how can I dis- "possess them? thou shalt not be afraid of "them, *but shalt well remember what the Lord "thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all "Egypt, the great temptations which thine eyes "saw*, and the signs, and the wonders, and "the mighty hand, and the stretched-out arm,

* Deut. vi. 20, &c.

" whereby the Lord thy God brought thee out: " so shall the Lord thy God do unto all the " people of whom thou art afraid." * Instances without number might be adduced, if it were requisite; but such is the whole tenor of the law.

This language is wholly incompatible with the idea that Moses acted under a forged commission. Suppose it admitted, that he considered the agency of a Creator the most rational belief, and that he abhorred idolatry as the parent of cruelty and abomination; suppose it granted, that he deemed it most suitable to the character of a rude and ignorant people, to declare in positive terms, instead of proving by argument, the sum of his own faith, and to profess himself the instrument of Heaven in promulgating it; suppose, I say, all those concessions made, which no rational person would agree to make in contradiction to probability and experience: yet still he must have acted on a different plan; he would not have appealed to the senses, the con-

* Deut. viii. 17.

sciousness, and the memory of the people, in matters where every one of them could have contradicted him. This has not been the practice of false pretenders to divine communication. Minos had no witnesses to his conferences with Jupiter on mount Ida; those of Numa with the goddess Egeria were private and nocturnal. It was in the cave of Hera, that Mahomet, in secret retirement, "consulted the spirit of fraud or enthusiasm."* None of these challenged the assembly of their nation, as able to bring their testimony to the facts on which they founded their pretensions; none of them collected the people to be witnesses of the miraculous appearances which attested the delivery of the law. Allusions to these supernatural facts on which the law is professedly built, are closely interwoven with it, in a manner perfectly natural on supposition of their truth and recent occurrence; but totally unaccountable on any other.

This point is, indeed, so unanswerably strong, that it is impossible to believe the law to have

* Gibbon.

been introduced at the time it professes, and by the reputed author, except on the conviction of its divine appointment. Whoever denies assent to the facts declared in the law, must begin by refuting the authenticity and supposed antiquity of the law. These are questions, which it would carry me too far out of my present line of argument to discuss at length. Besides, it is quite unnecessary to tread over again the steps of the many able writers who have repeatedly answered, to the entire satisfaction of any reasonable disputant, the few and trifling objections that may be raised against the age of the Pentateuch.*

One point must be particularly observed: that it is not sufficient to object to the received date of the law, without assigning some other specific period for its introduction. The history it involves, and the statutes enacted in it, were indisputably received by the conquerors of Palestine as the records of their ancestors, as the authority by which they settled in a foreign

* See Appendix, No. III.

country, as the foundation of their civil and domestic institutions, and as the canon of their religious belief and ceremonies. It becomes incumbent, therefore, on those, who dispute the professed account of its origin, to explain the problem in some more credible manner. If the law did not proceed, in all essentials, exactly as we read it now, from Moses and Mount Sinai, from whom, and whence, did it proceed? The building was undoubtedly raised: what then was its support, if it was not founded on miraculous interposition? This demand we have a right absolutely to insist upon, though it imposes a task of no slight difficulty, and is seldom voluntarily undertaken.

Any account of the Pentateuch, except that which appears on the face of the book itself, is embarrassed by objections which I shall only briefly glance at. It professes to contain the law prescribed to the Israelites on their migration from Egypt, by Moses, under the divine direction; which direction had been manifested by their miraculous deliverance from slavery,

and by many indisputable signs. But this, it seems, is incredible. When then did they receive the records of the law, and from whom?* It can make but little alteration in the difficulty, to whatever period or person we may be referred. It is not of much consequence at what time we suppose an impostor to have appeared, and to have furnished the Hebrews with a history of their ancestors, and of the origin of their laws. At some period or other, certainly, we must believe that the nation accepted a series of records, professing to acquaint them with the transactions of their progenitors, from their first settlement as a single family in Egypt, to their final settlement in the country they then enjoyed by conquest. That these records were false; or otherwise the miraculous interference they contain must be acknowledged; yet that no recollection or tradition of their real history remained to contradict the imposture, and that no individual existed in the country, with under-

* The argument arising out of this question is put in the strongest and clearest light by Leslie, in his unanswerable treatise, "A short Method with a Deist."

standing enough to question its author as to the information he had thus suddenly acquired upon subjects, concerning which all had been hitherto equally ignorant; no one to demand the proofs of his history, or the credentials of his authority: that the people were not astonished at the miracles, pretended to have been wrought in favour of their ancestors, or incredulous as to the order of nature having been so often infringed without any record or memory of such facts; nor indignant at the injury offered to the character of their forefathers, by representing them as often rebellious against the clearest miracles and the kindest promises. Improbabilities like these are overlooked, when it is desired to undermine revelation; but it would be a heavy task to support it on similar grounds.

Allowing, however, even all this to be granted, how shall we explain the existence of a law like that of the Hebrews, so strict in its articles and so peculiar in its nature, on any other principle than the foundation which it claims? To say nothing here of its sublimity and purity, how is

it possible to account for such a code having been received and acted upon by such a people, except on the credit of the extraordinary circumstances under which it professes to have been established?—a code neither suited to the customs, nor the prejudices, nor the passions of mankind; and in particular most opposite to those of the people who received it, as being contrary to the habits they had brought with them from Egypt, as well as to the practices of all the nations by whom they were surrounded:—a code encumbered with burdensome ceremonies, and entailing a variety of severe obligations; nay, farther, containing in itself, as I shall presently show, the seeds of its own destruction, unless its observers had really been supported by that divine assistance, which the words of the law promise, and the history records.

It is not enough to answer all this generally, by saying, that a barbarous people are easily amused by miracles, and genealogies, and legends of antiquity. I should be much surprised, I confess, to learn that any people however barbarous,

had been imposed upon to this extent: but, in regard to the particular case of the Mosaic law, it must be observed, that the imposition itself requires a certain degree of civilization, far removed from stupid, and careless, and uninquiring ignorance. Such a state neither produces an impostor who could propose it, nor a people who could understand it. A nation must be advanced, or advancing, at least, beyond the lowest stage of barbarism, which could be the subject of a legislation such as that of Moses; entering so minutely into the details of civil life, providing often for transactions of a complicated nature, and supposing the existence of a regular police, priesthood, and magistracy. How it happened, that such a description should be applicable to the Israelites, just emerging from a state of servitude, the opponents of the divine commission of Moses are bound to discover: but it is a palpable contradiction to affirm, that they were barbarous enough to be deceived by any ingenious impostor, at the same time that they were civilized enough to be in possession of such a law.

From the details of this Section, it has appeared

that the object prevailing through the Hebrew polity, is entirely different from that which legislators have commonly proposed to themselves; and that antiquity furnishes no example of a state, the principal scope of whose laws was to maintain the belief of a Creator, or indeed in which that belief was at all inculated with a confidence any way comparable to that expressed by Moses. This circumstance alone, it will be owned, gives reasonable grounds for a presumption of its having a different origin from that of other civil governments. And this presumption is confirmed by the words employed to the persons who were to observe the law: words addressing them as actual witnesses of the mode in which it was conveyed to them, and by which its divine appointment was proved to their complete conviction: a confirmation, strengthened by the reflection, that no period has been or can be specifically assigned, when a fabrication so gross as a forged history and fabulous archives could be imposed upon them.

This sort of evidence is all that the case allows.

It is accumulated in favour of the Hebrew laws in the highest conceivable degree; and has been drawn out at different times in a variety of ways, any one of which might be justly deemed satisfactory; rendering it, upon the whole, a most impracticable task for any one who considers the matter in detail, to maintain that Moses acted on his own assumed authority.

Hitherto, therefore, I think it has been satisfactorily shown, that the peculiar nature of the Hebrew polity affords strong grounds for believing that it was divinely instituted, for the purpose of preserving the records of the creation; inasmuch as the worship and commemoration of the Creator was the chief and primary object of the Hebrew legislator, which, with other legislators, is only made auxiliary and subservient to *their* main object, the welfare of the state.

SECTION IV.

Peculiar Sanctions of the Mosaic Law.

It is not only by such a consideration of the object of the Hebrew Polity, as was entered upon in the preceding section, that we may derive an irresistible argument for its divine institution: but the peculiarity of its provisional sanctions, and the deviations from the ordinary course of nature on which they confidently rely, must bring us to the same conclusion. I take it as an acknowledged principle, that every lawgiver provides for the observance of his statutes, by such penal enactments as he has within his power; and would be more anxious to establish a belief of the certainty, than even of the severity, of his punishments. It was for this reason that the

terrors of future judgment were called in, as we have seen, to assist the inadequacy of human justice, by some of the ancient lawgivers; and to assure offenders that the vengeance, which must necessarily prove often tardy and uncertain on this side the grave, will be sure and swift on the other.

Moses, however, relies on this vengeance as *immediate;* and employs the sanction of a retributive providence as confidently, as if he held the lightning in his own hands, and wielded the government of the world. All his enactments imply that sort of dependance on divine interposition, which could not be derived from any experience of the usual course of events. Obedience to the commandments is not only enjoined as a positive duty, but as the sure source of all prosperity, both national and individual. "And it "shall come to pass, *if thou shalt hearken dili-* "*gently unto the voice of the Lord thy God,* to "observe and to do all his commandments which "I command thee this day, that the *Lord thy* "*God will set thee high above all nations of the*

" *earth.* The Lord shall cause thine enemies " that rise up against thee to be smitten before " thy face ; they shall come out against thee one " way, and flee before thee seven ways. *The* " *Lord shall command a blessing upon thee in thy* " *storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine* " *hand unto ;* and all people of the earth shall see " that thou art called by the name of the Lord, " and they shall be afraid of thee."* On the other hand, disobedience, and particularly in the matter of idolatry, is threatened with the severest chastisements that can befal a nation ; with private distress, and public calamity ; with the annihilation of the government, and the captivity of the people. " See, I have set before thee this " day life and good, and death and evil ; in that I " command thee this day to love the Lord thy " God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his com- " mandments and his statutes and his judgments, " &c. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou " wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and " worship other gods, and serve them ; *I de-* " *nounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely*

* Deut. xxviii.

" *perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days*
" *upon the land*, whither thou passest over Jor-
" dan to go to possess it. The Lord shall scatter
" thee among all people, from the one end of the
" earth even unto the other; and among these
" nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall
" the sole of thy foot have rest." *

Thus the duration of the whole civil polity is made dependant on the adherence of the people, not to the established form of government by magistrates and elders, but to the established worship: and its dissolution is represented as consequent, not on a violation of the political ordinances, or moral code, so much as on a departure from that allegiance which was due to God, as the author of the whole, and on a dereliction of the worship which he had appointed as suited to the immateriality of his essence, and as calculated at the same time to inspire an habitual conviction of his superintending power.

Again, the case is supposed of the crime of dis-

* Deut. xxx.

obedience, and of the infliction of the consequent penalty, defeat and captivity: and it is positively declared, that repentance and an acknowledgment of the Creator, and a return to his worship, shall be rewarded by his forgiveness of their transgressions, and the re-establishment of their temporal power. "And it shall come to pass, "*when all these things are come upon thee*, the "blessing and the curse which I have set before "thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among "all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath "driven thee; *and shalt return unto the Lord* "*thy God*, and shalt obey his voice according to "all that I command thee here this day, thou and "thy children, with all thine heart and with all thy "soul; *that then the Lord thy God will turn thy* "*captivity*, and have compassion upon thee, and "will return and gather thee from all the nations "whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee; "and thou shalt return and obey the voice of "the Lord, and do all his commandments which "I command thee this day." *

* Deut. xxx. 1—8.

Throughout this, there is a total defiance of the ordinary process of human affairs. I do not allege it as remarkable, that the lawgiver should represent the observance of his laws as essential to the interests, or even to the existence, of his community: we know that Lycurgus attempted to provide by a stratagem, for the perpetuity of his institutions; and that Charondas suffered a voluntary death, to show the sanctity in which he held his own edicts: but what *is* remarkable, is the nature of the laws, to which Moses attaches such great importance. The laws which common experience proves to be the safe-guards of a nation, and which patriotic legislators have desired to sanction, even at the expense of their own lives, relate to the national defence, the political economy, the frugal dispensation of the revenues, or the social duties of the citizens. But in the Mosaic code, all these bulwarks of security are either totally unprovided for, or comparatively neglected. The Hebrews were preparing to take possession of a country by conquest, and might reasonably expect to be surrounded with implacable enemies; yet no

pains are taken to secure or discipline a national army. It does not enter into the contemplation of the legislator, that his people, however suddenly assembled as occasion might require, could ever fail of success, either in attacking a foreign territory, or in defending their own, as long as they continued true to their invisible Head and Governor. Neglecting all human means, such as national treasures, or military exercises, he promises his people victory, and assures them of security, as long as they continue to "obey the "voice of the Lord their God, and do his com- "mandments and his statutes."* Let them only be faithful to the worship of the Creator, "the "Lord," he says, "shall cause thine enemies that "rise up against thee to be smitten before thy "face: and all people of the earth shall see that "thou art called by the name of the Lord, and "they shall be afraid of thee."†—"Ye shall "chase your enemies, and they shall fall before "you by the sword. And five of you shall "chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall

* Deut. xxvii. 10. † Deut. xxviii. 7, 10.

" put ten thousand to flight; and your enemies " shall fall before you by the sword."*

If, on the contrary, they will not observe the words of the law, " to fear this glorious and " fearful name, the Lord their God," they are threatened with destruction as a people in a manner as particular and confident, as if the future event were present to the eye of the legislator. " *The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king* " *which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation* " *which neither thou nor thy fathers have known;* " and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood " and stone; and thou shalt become an asto- " nishment, a proverb, and a by-word among " all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee."†

Still farther, that he might influence those as individuals who were careless of the public welfare, Moses not only presumes upon a power of directing foreign armies and future political events, as in the passages already cited; but

* Lev. xxvi. 7, 8. † Deut. xxviii. 36.

he speaks as if pestilence and famine, and all the hosts of diseases, were placed under his authority. The Lord, he says, to punish your idolatry, "*will make thy plagues wonderful, and* "*the plagues of thy seed: moreover, he will bring* "*upon thee all the diseases of Egypt,* which "thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto "thee."*—"If ye will not hearken unto me, "and will not do all these commandments, I "will do this unto you; I will appoint over "you terror, consumption, and the burning "ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause "sorrow of heart; and ye shall sow your seed "in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. *I will* "*bring a sword upon you that shall avenge the* "*quarrel of my covenant;* and when ye are ga- "thered together within your cities, I will send "the pestilence among you; and ye shall be "delivered into the hands of the enemy."†

Lastly, should they hereafter, in despite of the promises held out to them on the one hand, and the threats denounced on the other, rush

* Deut. xxviii. 59. † Levit. xxvi. 14, 15. 25.

into the forbidden sin, and incur the captivity appointed as the punishment of their rebellion; they are not led to expect deliverance through the interference of friendly powers, or by training up their youth to arms, or by the gradual multiplication and increase of strength among those that may have been left at home; or by any of those means, in short, by which a legislator, under common circumstances, might be conceived likely to provide a remedy for some foreseen contingent evil: but their restoration is to be effected, if at all, by a return to that inward faith and pure worship, to their desertion of which their calamity is ascribed. "If "they shall confess their iniquity, and the ini- "quity of their fathers, with their trespass "which *they trespassed against me*, and that also "they have walked contrary to me; and that "*I also have walked contrary to them, and have* "*brought them into the land of their enemies;* "if then their uncircumcised hearts be hum- "bled, and they accept of the punishment of "their iniquity; *then will I remember my cove-* "*nant with Jacob*, and also my covenant with

" Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham " will I remember; and I will remember the " land."*

Now the object, I conceive, which a person would naturally prescribe to himself, having the design attributed to Moses of imposing a code of laws upon his countrymen, would be, in the first place, to create a favourable impression of those laws with the people to whom they were addressed, by making them agreeable to their reason, and their experience of the common course of human affairs. But it cannot be pretended that the blessings and the curse with which Moses sanctions his code, are framed in any degree upon the model of the usual law of God's moral government. That vice, upon the whole, is detrimental to the temporal prospects and success of an individual, cannot certainly be denied; and examples may even be found of the collective vices of a nation leading to such a degradation of the national character, as to render a country

* Lev. xxvi. 40. See also the passage already quoted from Deuteronomy xxx.

an easy prey to foreign enemies. But it is not this distant and gradual effect of immorality which the language of Moses points at: neither is the crime which he specifically threatens with captivity, one that can be at all supposed to lead to it in the way of natural consequence. He denounces national destruction as the immediate punishment of *national idolatry*, just as a legislator in ordinary circumstances threatens treason with banishment or death, while he holds the means of inflicting them in his hands. No pains are taken to enforce the probability of this judgment, considered as a natural proceeding. For who, after all, were to execute the punishment? Not the more virtuous and more pure worshippers, as might have been expected on the general principle of retribution; but it is declared as an additional degradation to the Hebrews, that their overthrow should be effected by idolaters, and they themselves be brought to "serve other gods, wood and stone."*

Again, Moses is not contented, as other law-

* Deut. xxviii. 36.

givers are forced to be, with threatening punishments, but he also promises rewards. And his rewards it would be as absurd for a person in ordinary circumstances to offer, and for a people under no peculiar dispensation to expect, as we have seen the punishments to be: since the prosperity which is to be the consequence of their obedience, must arise from the course of the seasons, and depend upon the winds and clouds of heaven: being no other than the fruitfulness of the land, and the increase of their flocks and herds. "*If* ye walk in my statutes, and keep "my commandments, *then I will give you rain* "*in due season, and the land shall yield her* "*increase,* and the trees of the field shall "yield their fruit. And your threshing shall "reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall "reach unto the sowing-time: and ye shall eat "your bread to the full, and dwell in your land "safely. And I will give peace in the land, and "ye shall lie down, and none shall make you "afraid; and I will rid evil beasts out of your "land."*

* Levit. xxvi.

It would seem an idle waste of time if I were to set about proving systematically, that this is not a skilful adaptation of the regular laws of Providence, deduced from an attentive observation of the general course of divine government, and applied to the sanction of a code pretending to divine authority. No one, indeed, admitting the agency of a Creator, can doubt that a general providence ordains the series of events, and that a particular providence superintends the inferior agents by whose instrumentality they are brought about: but no one can follow the path, or trace the steps of its operation. Look through a body of individuals; who will venture to assign their success to their moral virtues, or their misfortunes to their guilt? Still more, survey the nations of the world: is it possible to estimate the degree of their idolatry by their comparative barrenness, or to find any proportion preserved between the natural fertility of the land and the moral merits of the people? The result of observation and experience is, that the good and the bad, the wheat and the tares, grow up together till the harvest, and that the sun shines and

the rain falls on the just and unjust without discrimination : this inequality being in fact essential to a probationary state, which supposes all exactness of retributive justice to be reserved for another.

If then such is the actual and undeniable course of things, no rational impostor, intending to devise a constitution for an infant people, would have rested its stability on a violation of that course, or sanctioned his laws upon a presumption of supernatural interference, unauthorized by the order of nature, and contradicted by every day's experience. It is indeed possible that he might, in general terms, have instructed his people to depend upon the divine blessing, whilst they obeyed the laws proposed to them, and to dread divine vengeance, as the certain consequence of disobedience. He might have gone as far as Zaleucus, in saying that " every one ought to labour all he can to become good, both in practice and principle, whereby he will render himself acceptable to the Deity."* But he never could have proposed this invisible arm

* Τὸν μέλλοντα εἶναι θεοφιλῆ.

as the primary instrument of success, or minister of punishment; or have rested such entire dependance on the divine agency, as to expect it to supersede the usual means of victory, or national defence. Let us refer to the example of Mahomet: no one with more confidence, or apparent enthusiasm, assured his followers of the assistance of Heaven: and without hesitation, in the moment of danger, "he demanded the succour of Gabriel and three thousand angels."* But however he might endeavour to inflame by religious feelings the national valour of his Arabian followers, we do not find that he neglected any of the known means of success: he first inured his troops to perfect discipline; and then, with consummate address, he brought in enthusiasm, not as a substitute for the common instruments of victory, but as an additional incitement to their courage, by assigning the highest rewards of a future state to the most heroic warrior. "The sword," says the Koran, "is the key of heaven and of hell: a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms,

* Gibbon, vol. ix. p. 299.

is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer: whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven: at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermilion and odoriferous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubims."* This is not the language of Moses: who calmly says, "*ye shall walk in all the ways* which the "Lord your God hath commanded you, *that ye* "*may live, and that it may be well with you.*"† Mahomet argues, Pursue the most decisive measures to secure success, and then trust that the divine aid will accompany the defenders of the faith; while Moses, in a tone directly opposite, dissuades his people from trusting to themselves, or to any other security than their obedience to the commandments, and abstinence from idolatry.‡

As yet, however, we have touched upon only half the argument. The Hebrew leader not only overlooks human means, and substitutes heavenly protection for the usual and experi-

* Gibbon, chap. l. † Deut. v. 32.

‡ Deut. vi. 24; viii. 11, to the end of the chapter; &c.

enced instruments of national success and stability; but he superadds enactments which must actually render the Israelites, in every human view, an easy prey to their enemies.

The first institution trenching upon the strength and security of the state is that of the Sabbath: an institution which, when observed in its original strictness and austerity, was not merely calculated to produce the effect which we now derive from its more limited obligation, of increasing the powers of a people, by sparing their exertion; but afforded an easy opening for the destruction of the whole nation by any enemies who should become acquainted with the Hebrew law. So severe was the appointment, that no work could be undertaken, either abroad or at home, on the Sabbath; not only the active operations of war were forbidden, but all the preparations for them: nor was there even any indulgence, permitting a regard to the business of self-defence.

There is no occasion for argument to point out

the difficulties which must arise from such an institution: the examples of the later ages of the Jewish state furnish a sufficient proof that the evil is not imaginary. In the first place it appears from the history of the Maccabees, that the troops of Antiochus Epiphanes attacked a body of Jews, belonging to Mattathias's party, on the Sabbath; who would neither repel their assault, nor defend the cavern in which they had taken refuge;* "but said, Let us die in our inno-"cency: heaven and earth shall testify for us, that "ye put us to death wrongfully." This seems to have been the first calamity into which the nation had been suffered to fall, in consequence of their strict adherence to the words of the Mosaic law: for the experience of this event having satisfied Mattathias that the extraordinary providence by which such misfortunes had hitherto been averted, was now withdrawn, a general determination was made, with respect to the future, to proceed as far as *self-defence*, and repel force by force on the Sabbath.†

* 1 Mac. ch. ii.

† 1 Mac. v. 40, 41. The account is confirmed by Josephus, xii. 6.

Subsequent events, however, prove, that even such modified observance of this particular day, if unaccompanied by the divine interference, was quite inconsistent with the public safety. When Pompey attacked Jerusalem, the inhabitants adhered to the determination proposed by Mattathias. Pompey, therefore, perceiving that he could carry on his works with impunity on the Sabbath, the Jews making no effectual opposition provided he did not actually force them to engage, employed that seasonable opportunity for raising his towers and battering-engines, and proceeded in the attack on the following day by means of this advantage:* a stratagem which soon ended in its natural consequence, the capture of the city. From that time the institution of the Sabbath seems to have been considered, what it really was, a regular advantage to any invader of Judæa.†

* Joseph. Antiq. Jud. l. xiv. p. 614, ed. Huds.

† The governor of Babylonia, Josephus acquaints us, attempted to surprise Asinæus on the Sabbath, *διόμενος οὔ τολμήσειν ἀντιστάτησαι ἀυτῷ τοὺς πολεμίους, ἀλλ' ἅμαχί λαβεῖν ἀυτοὺς δεδομένους*. This plot, however, was counteracted by the vigilance of the Jewish leader. Jos. xviii.

It is worth remarking, too, that other nations were so well convinced of the necessary effect of this institution, as to judge at once that it rendered the Jews unfit for any of the operations of war. In the year of Cæsar's death, the consul Dolabella exempted them from military conscription, on their pleading that it was against their laws to act on the Sabbath, and also that they were precluded from the use of customary food. And afterwards, under Nero, when the seeds of rebellion against the Roman authority were first beginning to appear, Agrippa endeavours to check the spirit of discontent, by warning the Jews how little prospect of success they could entertain against a powerful enemy, who possessed a decided advantage over them from this very peculiarity of their religious laws. "If," he argued, "you observe the duties of the Sabbath, and abstain from labour on that day, you become an easy prey to the enemy, as your

p. 828. Frontinus enumerates among his stratagems, that Augustus Vespasianus Judæos, Saturni die, quo nefas erat quicquam seriæ rei agere, adortus superavit, quia noluerunt arma attingere.

ancestors in the siege under Pompey. If, on the contrary, you transgress your law to avoid the consequences which must result from its observance, then you defend a religion which you yourselves are violating, and have nothing to hope from the divine protection."*

It is evident then, that the actual events of history confirm the suggestions of common sense, as to the natural effects to be expected from the rigid attention to the Sabbath prescribed by Moses. No one therefore can reasonably suppose that any legislator acting upon his own authority, would have endangered his state by such a suicidal ordinance. This, however, is by no means the only enactment which must have inflicted a death-blow upon any such polity of mere human institution. It was positively appointed,† that three times a year all the men of the country should appear together for the purpose of worship at the place that should be appropriated to the peculiar manifestation of the divine presence, viz. originally the tabernacle, and after-

* Jos. de Bello Jud. l. ii. p. 1089. † Exod. chap. xxxiv.

wards the temple at Jerusalem. What was this, but to provide as it were for leaving a frontier exposed, which was surrounded on all sides by inveterate enemies? Moses therefore accompanies the enactment by a divine declaration which was to quell alarm: "I will cast out the nations "before thee, and enlarge thy borders: *neither* "*shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt* "*go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice* "*in the year.*"* The objections which in a human view oppose the appointment and attend the observance of such an ordinance, are so clear and evident, that when Jeroboam dreaded the effect of a meeting between his revolted tribes and their brethren, he had a ready plea at hand for abrogating the usage; and urging that it was too much for his people to go up to Jerusalem,† he prescribed two places where they might more conveniently assemble.

The appointment of the Sabbatical year is more extraordinary still: still less agreeable, if possible, to the idea of human invention. It is

* Exod. xxxiv. 24. † 1 Kings xii.

conceived in these terms: "When ye come into "the land which I shall give you, then shall the "land keep a Sabbath unto the Lord. *Six years* "thou shalt sow thy field, and *six years* thou "shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the "fruit thereof: *but in the seventh year shall be* "*a Sabbath of rest unto the land*, a Sabbath for "the Lord: thou shalt neither prune thy vine-"yard nor sow thy field."* This is a point, which never could have been insisted on by any lawgiver, having only in view the usual considerations of the wealth and security of his nation. It strikes at the root of political economy, and proceeds on a defiance of every object which a legislator has most at heart, by legalizing idleness, and causing an intermission of the regular avocations of the people. Any such intermission is calculated to inflict a twofold injury; not only by the immediate loss of time and its products, but by the consequent loss of habit and inclination. No man therefore could of his own accord have devised such an appointment; which was indeed only suited to a nation having a peculiar office, independent of the com-

* Levit. xxv. 2.

mon business of life, and enjoying a peculiar protection, independent of the usual sources of prosperity. The disadvantages attending it could only have been compensated by the paramount necessity of preserving among the Israelites a constant sense of the power and faithfulness of God, and of the providence with which he secured to them the possession of their land, as long as they adhered to the conditions on which they held it.*

That the nation, in point of real fact, could not maintain its ground against these rigid institutions without this extraordinary providence to correspond with them, we have here, as before, the testimony of actual history. The regulations of Moses, with the veneration which naturally adhered to the authority by which they were originally prescribed, were strictly followed on the re-establishment of the nation after the captivity at Babylon: though that signal accomplishment of the denunciations contained in the law from the beginning, might have satisfied the Hebrews that the terrors of punishment had not been

* See Lowman on the Hebrew Ritual, p. 186, &c.

vainly threatened, but that, as they had withdrawn their allegiance, God had withdrawn his protection. The natural consequence was soon perceived. Under Antiochus Eupator Jerusalem and the fortress of Bethsura were besieged in the "year of rest," and after a spirited but useless defence the former was taken, it having been impossible to procure provisions: and the latter was quickly surrendered, from the same distress of famine.* When Antigonus also had sought refuge in Jerusalem from Herod, who was supported by the Romans, they suffered dreadfully from scarcity, the event having fallen upon the Sabbatical year.†

Could any one, let me ask, possessed of understanding to devise the Hebrew law, have failed to foresee these inconveniences; and having foreseen them, have proceeded to encumber his people, unnecessarily it would seem, with such difficulties, and have proposed to them to subscribe, in a manner, to their own destruction, by vowing obedience to laws so big with danger? To this

* Mac. i. 6, 48, &c. Jos. Ant. p. 661. † Joseph. 637.

question let the legislator furnish his own reply. He does not propose these observances blindly and ignorantly, and with no regard to the objections arising from them; but he overrules the objections, by the importance of his views in their establishment, and trusts to the power under which he acted, for a security against the evident danger to be apprehended. "Keep my judg-"ments," he declares in the name of the Almighty, "and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. "*And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the se-*"*venth year?* behold, we shall not sow nor ga-"ther in our increase: then I will command "my blessing upon you in the sixth year, *and it* "*shall bring forth fruit for three years.* And "ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of "old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits "come in shall ye eat of the old store."*

Moses therefore appoints the observance of customs, which it is plain from reason, and which he undoubtedly foresaw, required supernatural protection; and upon this supernatural

* Levit. xxv. 20, &c.

protection he instructs his people to rely. Whether they actually received this assistance, it is not necessary to discuss: but the question is, can we believe that he would have promised it in these confident terms, upon his own authority; or even if we suppose he might have been so insane an enthusiast, was the whole nation infected with his insanity in such a degree as to trust his promises, and pay him implicit obedience? Can we imagine that the Israelites, if they had not really been in the habit of seeing, in their deliverance from Egypt and their progress through the wilderness, continual evidence of divine interference, would have trusted the safety of their families, the liberty of their country, and their existence as a nation, to a deviation from all the known laws of nature, and the course of all former experience? Yet this they were in the continual custom of doing, not theoretically but practically three times every year, when they left their families and homes to "appear before the Lord" in the place specifically appointed, and when they allowed their lands to lie uncultivated, and gave up all the

produce of their possessions one year in seven. Sudden acts of desperation, or of valour approaching to desperation, have arisen from the immediate impulse of enthusiasm upon a people: but the calm and regular and formal observance of the Sabbath and stated sacrifices, and the habitual confidence in superior power, implied by a Sabbatical year, it is impossible to attribute to any such unsound influence: and it would be a waste of words to argue upon the subject, or bring the case to the test of practicability, with any supposed impostor now. For what had the Israelites seen, to corroborate any enthusiastic promise of an immediate providence, in the history of their ancestors for many generations? They had long been an injured and an unredressed people; who had settled in Egypt by invitation of its monarch, had increased its strength by their labour and numbers, and at last had been reduced to most abject slavery, and treated with unexampled cruelty: from which they had now rescued themselves through the greatest difficulties and dangers, but only on the hard conditions of leaving the country

of their nativity, to seek another, through a barren wilderness, by the exertions of their own valour. Take away all miraculous interposition from their departure out of Egypt, and from the promulgation of the law at Mount Sinai, and this is the tale that remains; no good foundation, it would appear, on which to build the doctrine of an extraordinary Providence punishing oppression and vindicating innocence, and accommodating the national prosperity to the national morals, in the exact proportion of retributive justice. Yet it was to a people who had this history fresh in their memories, that Moses proposed a law, which not only presumed, but declared, the constant superintendence of divine power, for the protection of the chosen nation: and it was a people who had suffered so much for want of an interposing Providence, who received a book of statutes, which, if they were not supported by a deviation from the common laws of things and seasons, made them the voluntary instruments of their own destruction.

If, then, any faith is to be placed in our experience of the human mind, the peculiar provisions of the Hebrew polity afford as strong an evidence of its divine appointment, and mark as strong a contrast between it and all human institutions, as was deduced in the former Section from the peculiar object it professes to have in view. The same conclusion must be drawn from both : for, as nothing could account for the object of the polity, except the truth of the accompanying history, so the peculiar provisions can only be explained by admitting that they were really established by the command of the Creator, and supported by his power. Nor is any preliminary fact assumed to establish the argument, or required to confirm it, except the real existence of the polity itself. The certainty of this we derive, not only from the original documents, which furnish the surest attainable authority in all cases relating to domestic and civil institutions, but from the incidental remarks of profane writers ; which either plainly indicate, or expressly declare, that the Jewish people were understood to possess a system of government

and religious worship, totally different from those existing among other nations. The observations arising from the cursory acquaintance of these writers with the Jews, ascertain their confidence in miraculous interposition; * their devout attachment to their religious belief; their scrupulous observance of the Sabbath; their abhorrence of idolatry; † their disdain of foreign na-

* This is to be collected from the supercilious remark of Horace,—Credat Judæus Apella, Non ego.

† Quidam sortiti metuentem Sabbata patrem,
Nil præter nubes et cœli numen adorant. Juv. xiv. 96.
In the succeeding lines he specifies all their most remarkable peculiarities: see, too, Mr. Gifford's note on the passage. Lucan, in a concise allusion, points at the peculiarity of their faith:

"Dedita sacris
Incerti Judæa Dei." Phars. lib. ii. l. 593.

Dion Cassius's account is specific, as to many points of their disagreement from the rest of the world, l. xxxvii. p. 41. Tacitus confirms the observance of the Sabbatical year: Septimum quoque annum ignaviæ datum. He expressly mentions that they held images as profane; and worshipped only one God, seen by the eye of the mind (menta solâ unumque Numen, intelligunt). He declares, too, that Moses instituted rites contrary to those of all other nations. The foundation of his account, which is a curious perversion of real history, exists in an ἐκλογη of Diod. Sic. p. 901. That author gives

tions, and unsociable aversion to all who did not profess their own religion. These are the only points to which we can possibly require the collateral evidence of foreign testimony: and to these most ample testimony is supplied. The profane historians and satirists, in the true spirit of polytheism, ridiculed the Jews as a superstitious people; and by that ridicule have confirmed the truth of the Jewish history, and thrown upon it the only additional light which the original records and documents we possess could receive.

us a general account of the Jews, reported to the inquiries of Antiochus Eupator, that they, after their establishment in Judea, *παραδόσιμον ποιῆσαι τὸ μῖσος πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους.*

Of their abhorrence of images, a curious instance, among many others, occurs in Josephus. The inhabitants of that part of the country through which Vitellius was passing in his route against the Arabians, anxiously besought him to forbear introducing among them their ensigns with the eagles attached to them: *οὐ γὰρ εἶναι ἀυτοῖς πάτριον περιορᾶν εἴκονας εἰς χώρὰν φερομένας.* Antiq. xviii. c. 6. s. 3, A still stronger resistance was made to the introduction of the image of Tiberius as an ensign into Jerusalem: and the threatened erection of Caligula's statue in the temple was the occasion of the greatest apprehension and despair. Jos. de Bel. Jud. xi. ch. 10.

Had the appearance of the Jewish rites and polity presented nothing extraordinary to the Romans, when the progress of their arms and commerce introduced such a nation to their knowledge, some colourable presumption might perhaps have been raised against the actual or literal observance of the Mosaic institutions. We learn, however, that their civil customs and religious tenets, as soon as they met the eyes of foreigners and polytheists, did appear exclusively peculiar. Whence then, let me finally ask, did this peculiarity arise? We may confidently affirm, that the singular tendency of the Mosaic economy, as laid down in the preceding Sections, and its peculiar provisions, as detailed in this, are inexplicable, except on the admission that the Jewish polity was really established for the purpose of preserving the knowledge and worship of the Creator, and supported by the national experience of miraculous interposition.

SECTION V.

On the religious Opinions of the Hebrews.

It is important to inquire, whether the general opinions prevalent among the Hebrew people, respecting the high matters declared to them in their law, furnish a corroboration of the conclusion derived from the tone in which that law is conceived. Was the belief of a Creator and Ruler of the universe maintained in any purity amongst them? Was their worship, with their hymns and addresses to the Deity, conformable to the belief which it was the object of their national institutions to inculcate? Was their superiority over other nations in these respects, at all proportioned to the peculiarity of their institutions? The result of this inquiry must fur-

nish either a material confirmation, or a strong objection to the divine appointment of the Mosaic law. For, if a rational and sublime belief of an omnipotent Creator and independent Governor of the world, be once impressed upon an infant people with the solemnity which accompanied the promulgation from Mount Sinai, it will naturally be supposed that its effect would not be confined to the devotions of the anchoret or speculations of the philosopher, but would display itself in the national worship of the people, and become interwoven with the whole texture of their morality and literature. Just views and sure conviction are at least to be expected, even though they should fail to produce undeviating obedience. The firmest conviction, we know experimentally, does not always tend to practical obedience in the progress of an individual through the difficulties and temptations of life; much less then should it be expected in a nation placed under such singular circumstances, and standing alone in the midst of a surrounding host of evil examples. Still, however, if it appeared that the Hebrew people were no more

pure or fervent in their piety, and no more consistent in their religious belief, than other ancient nations, an argument might be justly raised against their having really received a divine revelation, from the absence of its natural practical consequence. But it will be seen on examination, that the declarations and provisions contained in the Mosaic law were not only intrinsically good, but practically efficient; and that there was as much superiority in the religious opinions actually entertained by the Hebrews, as peculiarity in the means appointed to preserve them. This superiority is visible in their public worship, and displays itself remarkably in the notions of the Supreme Being which occur in their writings.

It is first to be observed, that a general belief in the existence of one spiritual, omnipotent, and omnipresent Being, the Creator of the world, was diffused throughout the Hebrew people. I shall hereafter take an opportunity of showing, that, even among the most learned and philosophical heathens, this belief did not prevail,

to any purposes of practical devotion. The language of Moses and of Plato, in extent and confidence, no more admits of comparison, than the conjectural reasoning of Galileo resembles the demonstrative conclusions of Newton. But a far more remarkable difference occurs as we descend in the scale of learning and civilization. The sublime opinions respecting the Deity which originate in the Mosaic account of the creation, and which are enforced and preserved by the law established to commemorate that fact, were not confined to any superior sect or philosophical part of the nation, but were alike familiar to the highest and lowest of the people. All worshipped the same God, according to the same form, in the same temple. No Peripatetic disputed, no Academic doubted, no Epicurean denied the truth of the national faith. It was justly pointed out by their learned countryman, that all held the same opinion, and agreed with the law in affirming that one God overruled the world: and it might be heard as the sentiment even of the vulgar and illiterate, that all should propose

to themselves piety towards Him, as their principal object in the various pursuits of life.*

Few readers require to be reminded how different a picture from this the other nations of the ancient world present. Detached passages indeed may be produced, particularly from the writings of Plato and Xenophon, which contain very sublime conceptions of some supreme artificer of the universe; but these doctrines were not only heard with no general effect, and converted few proselytes even among the instructed orders of society, but from the vulgar they were altogether withheld, as unsuited to their comprehensions. The difference between the esoteric and exoteric philosophy is universally acknowledged: and appears to be founded in a notion like that which made Plato declare, in a passage which has been often brought forward, that it was difficult to discover the father of the universe, and that,

* Joseph. contra Apion. "Of servants and women," in the original. The low rank which *they* held in ancient times, is notorious.

when discovered, it was impossible to make him generally known.*

Superstitious polytheism had struck its roots so deeply before Plato lived, that he probably had reason to apprehend all endeavours to eradicate it would be vain. But the consequence was, as might be expected, that the popular faith of the heathen vulgar was equally repugnant to reason and inapplicable to devotion. Instead of the unanimous confession and adoration of the same supreme Governor, which the Hebrews avowed, the people who set out to the festival of one deity, returned home to celebrate another; every element had its appropriate guardian, and every profession its peculiar patron. Perhaps no error is more natural to ignorance, than to suppose that particular deities preside over the various elements, or, influencing the powers both of body and mind, direct the several arts which exercise the ingenuity of man; but nevertheless it is error,

* Tim. p. 28. Tom. iii. Τόν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦδε τοῦ πάντὸς, ἐυρεῖν τε ἔργον, καὶ ἐυρόντα, εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν.

however natural; it is the error of ignorance; and flies from the test of reason as well as revelation.

No such inconsistency is to be found in the belief of the Hebrews. Instead of a general consciousness of some unseen powers, superior to themselves, united to a vague idea of some one particular power, superior to the rest, which may be considered as a loose outline of the popular faith of the heathen world; God was honoured among the Hebrews, under one consistent character: as a Being so spiritual, that he cannot be either represented, or properly worshipped, under any sensible image; and yet at the same time as constituting the fit object, and the only fit object, of human worship, inasmuch as he is the independent Creator and sole Governor of the universe.

It results from this sublime idea of the Divine unity and attributes, established by the writings of Moses, that we find an equal superiority over the rest of the ancient world, in the abstract conceptions on the subject of the

Divine essence* which exist in the Hebrew Scriptures, and in the public devotional worship which prevailed among the Hebrew peo-

* This superiority is strongly exemplified by the Nomen Tetragrammaton rendered Jehovah; and derived from a root signifying essence, or existence, τὸ εἶναι, or ὑπάρχειν. It is well known that the Jews commonly applied, and still apply, other titles to the Deity, as Shaddai, the rock, or powerful one, Adonai, or dominion, and Elohim, lords, i. e. sovereignty. The name Jehovah they hold in veneration, which makes them deem it ineffable, as not expressing the *attributes* only, but the *essence* of the Deity. It was well understood and preserved by the Septuagint translators, who render it κύριος à κύρω, sum, a word not classically used to signify God, as appears from Julius Pollux, who gives the words θεοὶ and δαίμονες, but not Κύριος. It appears, from various sources, that this was understood to be the title under which the Hebrews worshipped their Supreme (see Parkhurst Hebr. Lex. Pearson on the Creed, p. 147); and St, Hilary says, that meeting with the words (before his conversion to Christianity) which express the same idea, in Exodus, chap. iii., he was struck with admiration, there being nothing so proper to God, as *to be.* It was well suitable to the Divine dignity, when the Hebrews were the depositories of his being and attributes, and were surrounded on all sides by gods worshipped under various appellations, that the Creator should distinguish himself by a name signifying his independent essence, from which all other things derive theirs.

ple.* To set this matter in a true light, it will be necessary to institute an actual comparison between the Jews and other ancient nations; and as national worship takes its tone from the ideas of supreme power which prevail antecedently to its establishment, I shall first consider the nature of these ideas, as developed in their sacred compositions.

The Hebrews, as far as we know, seem to have cultivated general literature less than most nations who have attained, in other respects, an equal degree of civilization; far less, certainly, than the rivals with whom we are able to compare them, the inhabitants of Greece and Italy. Poetry, which usually branches out into a thousand various courses, following

* It was pretended by Tyndal and Collins formerly; that the Jews refined their old doctrines concerning the Deity, and invented new ones, just as the priests improved in knowledge, or the people advanced in curiosity, or as both were better taught in the countries to which they were led captive. The proper answer to this is, that they could no where learn such theology as that of Moses, or such devotion as that of David.

every variety of genius and national manners, is, with them, confined to the single channel of morality and religion. The battles and sieges they had known, furnished subjects to no epic poet; we hear no mention of dramatic representations: and their history, which has since proved so fertile a source of poetry, is recorded in concise and unambitious annals.

Inferior, however, in every other species of composition to the writers of other nations, the Hebrews abound with poetical addresses to the Supreme Being which infinitely surpass any similar attempts that can be brought into comparison. They contain ideas of omnipotence and omnipresence, disgraced by no sensible images; they concur in representing the same invisible and spiritual Being, to be the guardian of mankind, and the Creator of the whole universe: above all, they excel in describing the moral attributes of God, justice, and goodness, and mercy, existing together, and not counteracting each other. Almost the whole beauty of the Hebrew poetry may be traced to

that union of the natural and moral sublime, which was inspired by their belief of the majesty of the Creator. But this beauty is at once of the highest importance and of the most difficult attainment. It proves that these opinions respecting the moral attributes, as well as the unity, power, and majesty of the Creator, existed generally among the Jews: that the account of the creation, on which the legislation of Moses was founded, did not remain as a dead letter on the records, but influenced the belief and filled the conceptions of the people collectively considered. A poet indeed, choosing, like Milton, a sacred subject, may describe God as a wise and powerful Creator, and as a just and good ruler of the universe, who has no effectual belief that he deserves these appellations. But such a description proves at least that such a belief exists somewhere. The absence of similar conceptions from the heathen writings, affords a negative proof that no such belief existed among them: so that their poetry, however excellent in all subjects where the actions and characters of men are concerned, and however superior in

the arts and graces of composition, is nevertheless devoid of all dignity of style, or sublimity of sentiment, wherever it relates or is addressed to the superior powers.

It would be an injustice to the argument not to illustrate its truth, by comparing with those hymns which the ancient authors have left us, some of the effusions of Jewish devotion. And as the passages of this nature which remain from the wreck of heathen literature, being chiefly fragments, are less familiarly known than other ancient writings, I shall not hesitate to place them by the side of those Jewish compositions that may be most similar in subject.

The supremacy of Jupiter is described by Orpheus: and though much of that collection which passes under the title of the Orphic Hymns is confessedly interpolated, the following verses may be safely quoted, being preserved in pagan writings.*

* Proclus on the Timæus. Auctor de Mundo. Vide

"Jupiter, who commands the thunder, was first and last; Jupiter is the head and the midst: all things were formed from Jupiter; Jupiter is immortally both male and female; * Jupiter is the foundation of the earth and starry heaven; Jupiter is the breath of all things; Jupiter is the force of invisible fire; Jupiter is the root of the sea; Jupiter the sun and moon; Jupiter is the ruler; Jupiter himself the first origin of all. There is one power, one deity, one great ruler of all."

Cudworth, vol, i. p. 301. On the Orphic hymns there have been various opinions. In Origen's judgment, contra Celsum, l. 7, they are far inferior to Homer's. On the other hand, Pausaniæ judicio, l. 9, Orphei hymnis elegantiores existimantur Homerici, Orphei *θεολογικώτεροι*. et forte, secundum Allatii opinionem, compositi ab Onomacrito, ad Homeri imitationem. Meminit hymnorum Orphei Plato, 8. de Legibus: et Pausanias in Bœoticis, qui paucos et breves fuisse refert; unde non alios habuisse videtur quam nos hodie legimus. Fabric, Bib. Gr. i. 18.

† This idea is expressed in some verses of Valerius Soranus, quoted by Augustin from Varro, Civ. Dei, l. 7.

Jupiter omnipotens regum, rerumque deûmque
Progenitor, *genitrixque* deûm: deus unus et omnis.

To this description, in which the idea of a Supreme Governor is confounded with that adopted by the stoics, &c. which identified the Deity and the world,* I would oppose the expostulation of Isaiah, ch. xlv. ver. 5: "I am "the Lord, and there is none else; there is "no God beside me: I girded thee, (prophe-"tic of Cyrus,) though thou hast not known "me; that they may know from the rising of "the sun, and from the west, that there is "none beside me: I am the Lord, and there is "none else. I form the light, and create "darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I "the Lord do all these things. Drop down, "ye heavens, from above, and let the skies

* This error, which, I shall afterwards observe, pervaded the most specious systems of the ancient theology, is still more evident in the opening to Aratus's Phenomena, a sentence of which is quoted by St. Paul.

Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα· τὸν οὐδέποτ' ἄνδρες ἐῶμεν
Ἄρρητον· μεσταὶ δὲ Διὸς πᾶσαι μὲν ἀγυιαὶ,
Πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραὶ· μεστὴ δὲ θάλασσα,
Καὶ λίμενες· πάντη δὲ Διὸς κεχρήμεθα πάντες·
Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν.

" pour down righteousness; let the earth open,
" and let them bring forth salvation, and let
" righteousness spring up together; I the Lord
" have created it. Thus saith the Lord, the
" Holy One of Israel, and his maker; Ask me
" of things to come, concerning my sons, and
" concerning the works of my hands command
" ye me: I have made the earth, and created
" man upon it; I, even my hands, have
" stretched out the heavens, and all their host
" have I commanded."

A fragment of Euripides affords us an interesting specimen of rational devotion struggling against the uncertainty of corrupt belief: * " To thee who governest all things, I offer the libation and sacrificial cake, whether thou preferrest the title of Jove or Hades. Receive thou my plenteous offering of various fruits. For, directing among the celestial gods the sceptre of Jupiter, thou partakest also with Hades, the

* Fr. 155. There are many various readings throughout this fragment: I give the general sense, according to the text in Musgrave's edition.

kingdom of the gods below. Send the light of the soul to those of men who desire to know beforehand whence their labours spring, what is the source of evils, and whom of the gods they should appease by sacrifice, to receive a respite from their toils."

With this I would compare the 102nd of the Hebrew Psalms, of which the author is uncertain; it is supposed to implore the assistance of God for Jerusalem, either during the period of the Babylonish captivity, or soon after the deliverance of the Jews. It thus concludes, from verse 15: "When the Lord shall build up Zion, "he shall appear in his glory. He will regard "the prayer of the destitute, and not despise "their prayer. This shall be written for the "generations to come, and the people which "shall be created, shall praise the Lord; for "he hath looked down from the height of the "sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold "the earth; to hear the groaning of the pri-"soner; to loose those that are appointed to "death; to declare the name of the Lord in

" Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem; when the " people are gathered together, and the king- " doms to serve the Lord. He weakened my " strength in the way, he shortened my days. " I said, O God, take me not away in the " midst of my days; thy years are throughout " all generations. Of old hast thou laid the " foundation of the earth; and the heavens are " the work of thy hands; they shall perish, " but thou shalt endure, yea, all of them shall " wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt " thou change them, and they shall be changed; " but thou art the same, and thy years shall " have no end. The children of thy servants " shall continue, and their seed shall be esta- " blished before thee." *

Nothing, however, among the heathen devo-

* If I had any heathen relic which could be contrasted with it, I might here add the 103d Psalm, which is attributed to David, and in the grateful manner of thanksgiving contains a beautiful acknowledgment of the mercy and providence of God extended to individuals. Half of the Psalms indeed have an equal claim to selection with that I have taken; particularly Ps. cxxxviii. cxxxix.

tional pieces, is equal in consistent grandeur of ideas to the hymn ascribed to Cleanthes the Stoic, which candour requires me to cite at large.*

" Hail, O Jupiter, most glorious of the immortals, invoked under many names, always most powerful, the first ruler of nature, whose law governs all things; hail, for to address thee is permitted to all mortals. For our race we have from thee; † we mortals who creep upon the ground, receiving only the echo of thy voice.‡ Wherefore I will celebrate thee, and will always sing thy power. All this universe rolling round the earth, obeys thee wherever thou guidest, and willingly is governed by thee. So vehement, so fiery, so immortal is the thunder which thou holdest subservient in thy unshaken hands: for, by the

* Brunck, Gnomici Poëtæ, p. 141.

† Fabricius thinks it possible that St. Paul may have had this passage in view, as well as Aratus: Ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος ἐσμέν.

‡ Ἰῆς μίμημα λαχόντες Μο῀νον.

stroke of this, all nature was rooted; by this, thou directest the common reason which pervades all things, mixed with the greater and lesser luminaries; so great a king art thou, supreme through all; nor does any work take place without thee on the earth, nor in the ethereal sky, nor in the sea, except what the bad perform in their own folly. But do thou, O Jupiter, giver of all blessings, dwelling in the clouds, ruler of the thunder, defend mortals from dismal misfortune; which dispel, O father, from the soul, and grant it to attain that judgment, trusting to which thou governest all things with justice: that, being honoured, we may repay thee with honour, singing continually thy works, as becomes a mortal; since there is no greater meed to men or gods, than always to celebrate justly the universal law."

Though I am ready to confess that if this hymn had not stood alone among the heathen writings, my present argument* would have

* This hymn first occurs in Stobæus, who lived at the end of the fourth century. Cleanthes died 240 years before

lost much of its force; I think it will be found to yield both in distinctness of conception and

Christ. Diogenes Laertius, in his catalogue of Cleanthes' writings, makes no mention of it. What seems remarkable supposing it genuine, is, its escaping the notice of Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius: who were so anxious to adduce every thing ancient that might seem parallel to the Scripture, that they even quote from Homer's shield of Achilles;

Ἐν μὲν γαῖαν ἔτευξε, και οὐρανον, ἐν δὲ θάλασσαν,
Ἐν δὲ τὰ τείρεα πάντά τα τ' οὐρανος ἐστεφάνωται,

as similar to Moses's account of the creation. Præp. Ev. l. 13. p. 674.

The fact is, that, from a mistaken earnestness of the early Christians to recommend, as they hoped, Scripture, by confirming it from writers of classical estimation, the most obvious interpolations were introduced into any old writings upon sacred subjects. In the hymn which Warburton quotes from Orpheus, as the very hymn sung by the hierophant in the Eleusinian mysteries, there occurs this manifest forgery:

Οὐ γὰρ κέν τις ἴδοι θνήτων μερόπων κραίνοντα,
Ἐι μὴ μοννογένης τις ἀπόῤῥωξ φῦλου ἀνώθεν
Χαλδάιων.

Nothing can deserve much stress, which is not quoted before or about the Christian era.

With regard to Cleanthes it should be observed, that, whatever be the language of his hymn, those who possessed his philosophical writings ascribe to him the general opinions

confident devotion, to the following extract from the Book of Wisdom: "O God of my fathers, "and Lord of mercy, who hast made all things "with thy word, and ordained man through "thy wisdom, that he should have dominion "over the creatures which thou hast made, and "order the world according to equity and righte- "ousness, and execute judgment with an up- "right heart: give me wisdom, that sitteth "by thy throne, and reject me not from among "thy children. For I thy servant, and son of "thy handmaid, am a feeble person, and of a "short time, and too young for the understand- "ing of judgment and laws. For though a man "be never so perfect among the children of "men, yet if thy wisdom be not with him, he "shall be nothing regarded. And wisdom was "with thee, which knoweth thy works, and "was present when thou madest the world, and

of his sect. "Cleanthes ipsum mundum Deum dicit esse, tum totius naturæ menti atque animo hoc nomen tribuit." Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 1. "Cleanthes mentem modò animum, modò æthera, plerumque rationem Deum disseruit." Minuc. Felix, l. xix.

" knew what was acceptable in thy sight, and
" right in thy commandments. O send her out
" of thy holy heavens, and from the throne of
" thy glory, that being present, she may labour
" with me, that I may know what is pleasing
" unto thee. For she knoweth and under-
" standeth all things, and she shall lead me so-
" berly in my doings, and preserve me in her
" power. For what man is he that can know
" the counsel of God? Or who can think what
" the will of the Lord is? For the thoughts of
" mortal men are miserable, and our devices are
" but uncertain. For the corruptible body press-
" eth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle
" weigheth down the mind that museth upon
" many things. And hardly do we guess
" aright at things that are upon the earth, and
" with labour do we find the things that are be-
" fore us: but the things that are in heaven,
" who hath searched out? And thy counsels
" who hath known, except thou give wisdom,
" and send thy Holy Spirit from above? For
" so the ways of men which lived on the earth

"were reformed, and men were taught the "things that are pleasing unto thee, and were "saved through wisdom."*

Extracts, after all, fail in doing justice to the subject. The passages which I have selected from the Hebrew writings, are taken from a volume, which if a hundred persons were to read it with the same object in view, would probably lead each of them to fix upon different instances of beauty: but those which I have cited from ancient pagan writers, are the most important which the indefatigable Cudworth could discover for the purpose of supporting his overstrained hypothesis: nor am I aware of the existence of any remains superior to those I have adduced, since the general tenor of ancient poetry is altogether contradictory to them. The hymns of Homer and Callimachus, and those collected in the book of Hebrew Psalms, form a contrast of irresistible force.

* Wisdom, chap. ix. entire—excepting three verses relating to the assumed character of Solomon.

What deserves to be kept particularly in view, is the important fact, that in the Hebrew Scriptures there is no drawback of inconsistency, no passages which militate against the general impression of the rest. It would be quite disgusting, on the contrary, to quote at length the absurdities of the heathen hymns. That of Callimachus to Jupiter, which concludes with an air of grandeur, "Hail, O supreme Jupiter, the giver of blessings, the author of safety: who can sing thy works?"—has this unworthy introduction: "What can we better sing at the festival of Jove, than the god himself, always great, and perpetually governor, the conqueror of the earth-born Titans, who gives laws to the inhabitants of heaven? How shall I celebrate him, as Cretan or Arcadian? I am doubtful, since his origin is disputed. They say, O Jupiter, that thou wast born on Ida's mountain: they say also, in Arcadia: which, O father, has been false? The Cretans are always false, for they, O king, have raised a tomb to thee: but thou diedst not, for thou livest always." This is followed by a long account of the birth of Jupiter from Rhea.

It may be observed, that nothing has been quoted from any Roman poet. Rome, in fact, has left us nothing applicable to the purpose. The Carmina Sæcularia, or occasional hymns of Horace and Catullus, contain nothing superior to the gross superstitions of the vulgar. Of these, indeed, ancient poetry was the general repository; and instead of being devoted, as among the Hebrews, to the noble purpose of addressing or celebrating the Creator, is justly prohibited from his Utopia, by Plato, as inculcating ideas unworthy of the gods, and pernicious to mankind: and is condemned by Varro to the purposes of dramatic representation.*

The difference, therefore, which existed between the Jews and other nations in their civil institutions, continues farther, it has appeared, so as to impart a peculiar complexion to their literature. Their writings treat of the Creator in the same sublime tone and language as that which is inculcated in the law. And this with-

* Apud Augustin. de Civ. Dei, l. vi. c. 5, 6.

out exception. From the earliest to the latest of the Hebrew authors, there is an interval of at least 1200 years. Yet from the first to the last there is no contradiction. All their writers seem to have imbibed from the same fountain the same idea. Some parts may labour more than others under the disadvantage of translation scrupulously literal from a language imperfectly understood: but all agree in describing the unity, superintending power, and goodness of the Creator. To this spirit so universally diffused, the few gleams of genius which I have exhibited from heathen authors, and which occasionally break out from the heaviest clouds of error and obscurity, will no more bear comparison, than the blaze of a meteor to the steady light of the sun.

This too, as far as it goes, is surely important. It proves, that the impression made upon the people, in the infancy of their state, was both vivid and permanent. It proves that there was nothing contradictory between the state religion, and the popular sentiments. There

was not one system of theology for the poet, and another for the philosopher. And this is all uniform, and consistent with what was observed in the opening of this Section as a legitimate demand. It might be expected, that as the leading object of the Hebrew polity was different from any other known institution, similar traces of peculiarity might be found in the general sentiments and even habits of the nation. And there is this peculiarity. It was to be desired also that there should exist throughout the Hebrew writers, the same clearness of views, the same superior intelligence as to the creation and the unity of God, which it was so remarkably the purpose of the legislator to establish. And there is this decided superiority.

SECTION VI.

On the National Worship of the Hebrews.

The consideration of the devotional worship of the Israelites is of similar nature and importance to that pursued in the preceding Section. If we were to make a comprehensive survey, we should find the public worship of the various nations of mankind to be no inaccurate transcript of their abstract conceptions of the divine nature. Theoretical errors as to the character of the Deity, have uniformly led to corresponding errors in the popular religion. The worship of the ancient heathens was not only gross and licentious in general, as might be expected from the adorers of deified men; but was more or less licentious in pretty exact pro-

portion to the supposed nature of the individual deity, in whose honour the particular festival might be held. The national worship, therefore, may be considered as the practical test to which we can bring the religious feelings and popular opinions of a nation. As in addressing a superior in our intercourse with mankind, we adapt our language to the disposition of the individual; so a religious address will itself partake of the character, whether real or imaginary, which it is intended to propitiate or honour.

If we look into the ideas of the ancients respecting the worship of the Deity, we shall find that they fall generally under one of two comprehensive heads of error. The few who saw beyond the reigning superstitions, and either rejected the popular worship as absurd, or only complied with it as established by law and usage, went far into a contrary extreme; and maintained the plausible though mistaken argument, that it was unnecessary to apply to the Deity, who already knew our wants, and

was a better judge than the petitioner of the expediency of granting them.* This was the philosophical error; and, by restraining all communion between man and his Creator, was calculated to check his best and purest feelings, and to render him incapable of attaining that tranquil frame of mind, that pious confidence, which arises from well-directed devotion.

* This is the tenor of Socrates' discourse with Alcibiades. His conclusion is, Ἐμοὶ μέν οὖν δοκεῖ κράτιστον εἶναι ἡσυχίαν ἔχειν. Maximus Tyrius enlarges still farther upon Plato's idea, and has a dissertation professedly to dissuade from prayer, in which he employs a number of subtle and somewhat plausible arguments, to show how useless it must needs be for mortals to attempt to change either the course of providence or of destiny; and also, how unworthy it would be of the divine nature to be moved by entreaty. These are his conclusions: Μετατίθεσθαι καὶ μεταγινώσκειν προσκει μὴ ὅτι θεῷ, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἀνδρὶ ἀγαθῷ—and, ὅυτε οὖν ἐυχομένοις δώσει παρὰ τὴν ἀξίαν, ὅυτε οὐκ ἐυχομένοις οὐ δώσει κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν. See the whole of the 30th Dissertation. This authority is the more valuable, because the arguments are exactly such as might be expected from natural reason on the subject. Apollonius Tyanæus and Porphyry held nearly the same opinion. See Leland, p. i. p. 375.

Far worse, however, was the popular error, inasmuch as inactivity, though an evil, is a less evil than positive crime. The majority, who must always, in all countries, be led by the practice of their ancestors, zealously embraced, without hesitation or inquiry, that polytheism and idolatry, the details of which are no less disgusting than degrading; and practised a religious worship, to which the Bacchanalian feasts, the Lupercalia, the Floral games, the rites of Cybele, the Aphrodysia, the Dionysia, and Thesmophoria belonged.*

The antiquity of idolatrous worship, whatever was its origin, appears from the law of Moses, which forbade it; its universality is generally acknowledged. Both its universality and its antiquity show that it is the natural error of the human mind, which, being too conscious of its own weakness not to recur to superior power, and also too much enchained to the world with which it is conversant, to

* The enormities of these festivals are sufficiently exposed by Leland, in his "Advantages of Revelation."

abstract its attention to a spiritual object of adoration, fixes and addresses itself to a sensible image of its God.* That this is natural, appears not only from the practice of all uninstructed nations, but from the frequent relapses of the Jews into the custom of the countries by which they were surrounded, and even from the present habits of a large part of the Christian world; while the earnestness of the Roman Catholic devotions, however mixed with error, and the solemn awe of their religious processions, are a sufficient testimony of its effect. Experience, however, has proved, that in the rapid progress of evil, what was at first the emblem, soon becomes the object; and the sanctity due only to the unseen original, is transferred to the visible representation. Thus we find, that the images of departed ancestors

* The ancient Romans afford a melancholy instance. What idolaters they became is familiarly known. Yet, according to Plutarch and Dionysius, Numa prohibited the erection of statues in the temples, which law was obeyed for 170 years, till Tarquinius Priscus introduced Etrurian superstitions. Plut. in Vit. Numæ, p. 141. August. de Civ. Dei, iv. xxxi.

become objects of worship, where departed ancestors are considered as tutelar deities: where the sun, or other heavenly bodies, are looked upon as the gods of this world, there, as in Persia and Peru, veneration will be paid to emblematic fire; and in still ruder communities, the unmeaning work of human art, even an ancient stone or figure of unnatural proportion, will claim an hereditary title to vulgar and senseless superstition.

This prevalent error was at once foreseen and guarded against by the simple precept of the Jewish lawgiver, which forbade his people "to fall down and worship any graven image." In pursuance of this precept, while the disciples of Confucius and Zoroaster, the people of Lycurgus, of Solon, and of Numa, differed only in the degrees of grossness of their idolatry, the community of Moses renounced it; and practised, in the earliest times, a purity of worship, as unknown to the other ancient nations, as the God who was the object of it.*

* Varro, when lamenting the corruptions which attend

The religion of Greece and Rome (to which countries I confine myself, as being both most advanced in civilization, and best known to us) consisted chiefly in public festivals, which bore the name of the deity to whom they were consecrated, and usually began with a sacrifice, and ended in an exhibition of games and spectacles.* Though it may be affirmed with truth, that the religion of few among the ancients extended farther than the celebration, sometimes vicious and always licentious, of these festivals,

idolatry, is obliged to have recourse to the Jewish nation to prove the superiority of a contrary practice. Aug. ubi supra.

* It seems clear, from Homer's account, that the games originated in the honours paid to the memory of deceased warriors, and the performance of gymnastic exercises at their tomb. The scenic games were instituted at Rome, for the express purpose of averting the anger of the Gods. Quum vis morbi (according to Livy, l. 7. c. 2.) nec humanis consilliis nec ope divinâ levaretur, victis superstitione animis, ludi scenici inter alia cœlestis iræ placamina instituti dicuntur. It was impossible that celebrations of this kind should not introduce a spirit of irreligion and profaneness: as Augustin says, very pointedly, Non alii dii *ridentur* in theatris, quàm qui *adorantur* in templis; nec aliis *ludos exhibetis*, quàm quibus *immolatis*. De Civit. Dei.

it may perhaps be thought that we can no more consider them a specimen of ancient national worship, than we could judge of the Roman Catholic religion from a description of the carnival. It is desirable, therefore, and in this case possible, to penetrate farther, and draw a closer parallel.

All religion implies an acknowledgment of weakness, and a dependence on superior power; and as the hour of sickness, and approach of death, have always been considered as the surest trial of the religion of an individual, a season of public danger and calamity is the most proper test of the religion of a state. But, at Athens, the usual resources in cases of general alarm, was an extraordinary embassy to Delphi; which commonly terminated in the disturbance of the dead from the sacred island Delos, a removal of whose bodies and sepulchres was called its purification.* The national

* Thuc. l. 3. s. 104. Once, during the Peloponnesian war, the fancy arose that this purification had been deficiently performed, and it was proposed to secure the favour

religion prescribed an abundance of sacrifices, and favoured the frequent consultation of oracles; nor does it appear that this superstition was superficial only, or that any thing more sound and rational remained below so unpromising an exterior. Few of the hymns, which may have been recited in the temples on these and other solemn occasions, have survived the wreck of literature. But a passage, which may give a fair representation of the ideas accompanying the public worship of Greece, exists in the Œdipus of Sophocles, and introduces the Thebans imploring a respite from the pestilence drawn upon them by the unconscious incest of their king. In this supplication,*

of the god by an act of cruel injustice. The whole Delian people were expelled from their island without having any other settlement provided for them. Thuc. v. 11. Mitford, iii. 325.

* The chorus is thus translated by Franklin:

Minerva, first on thee we call:
Daughter of Jove, immortal maid,
Low beneath thy feet we fall;
O bring thy sister Dian to our aid.
Goddess of Thebes, from thy imperial throne

Diana and Apollo, Jupiter and Bacchus, are severally invoked, and besought to appear armed with the weapons in which they particularly excelled and delighted, in order to drive away the pestilence which depopulated Thebes. As far as can be judged from the remains that have been preserved to us, this is the general strain of the hymns which were recited in the Grecian temples, in which there is nothing satisfactory

Look with an eye of gentle pity down,
And thou, far-shooting Phœbus, once the friend
Of this unhappy, this devoted land,
O now if ever, let thy hand
Once more be stretch'd to save and to defend.
Drive hence this baneful, this destructive power,
To Amphitrite's wide-extending bed;
O drive him, goddess, from thy favourite land, &c.
Father of all, immortal Jove,
O now thy fiery terrors send;
From thy dreadful stores above
Let lightnings blast him and let thunders rend.
And thou, O Lycian king, thy aid impart,
Send from thy golden bow th' unerring dart;
Smile, chaste Diana, on this lov'd abode,
While Theban Bacchus joins the madd'ning throng;
O god of wine, and mirth and song,
Now with thy torch destroy the base inglorious god.

to reason or piety, except a confession of dependence.

Again, if we subject the religion of Rome to a similar criterion, its application to a period of public calamity, we shall find it by no means better able to abide the test: on the contrary, the current of superstition, instead of becoming clearer as it proceeds farther, is marked with the folly both of the country in which it arose, and of that through which it flowed. In the pestilence which occurred during the siege of Veii, the feast called Lectisternium was first devised; and eight days were devoted to appeasing at their respective temples the anger of Apollo, Latona, Diana, Bacchus, Hercules, and Neptune.* On another occasion, it is recorded in history, that when a continued pestilence rendered it necessary to have recourse to every expedient, it was recollected that a plague had been formerly checked by the fixing of a nail in a particular part of the Capitol; and a dictator was appointed for this very purpose. But the most

* Liv. l. 7; l. 3.

distinguished instance of Roman superstition is to be found in the year of the city 462,* when, in consequence of a pestilence which had for three years defied all assistance, human and divine, the Romans, according to the account of the historian, commissioned an embassy of ten persons to bring Æsculapius from Epidaurus, his supposed birth-place. On their arrival, Æsculapius favoured them; and, assuming his usual form of a serpent, took his station in the bark of L. Ogulnius, the chief of the embassy, and was thus conveyed in great state to Rome; where, as the bark proceeded along the river, all the city came together to enjoy a sight so extraordinary; altars were built, incense was burnt, and victims were slain upon the banks. At length, on an island of the Tiber, where the serpent disappeared, a temple was built by order of the senate to Æsculapius, and the pestilence ceased to rage.

It is curious to observe from this specimen, how low superstition may sink a great and gal-

* Freinsh. Suppl. ad Liv.

lant people, when human fancy alone is employed to raise the structure of religion.

Lest, however, it should be thought that this presents a single instance, or is drawn from a period when Rome had not attained a competent state of civilization, we have a picture not less remarkable from the pen of the most accomplished Roman, at the brightest æra of the Roman annals. Cicero has recorded, that, in the year of the city 688, many of the towers of the Capitol had been struck by lightning, which had melted many of the statues, and even that of the infant Romulus: which having alarmed the state, the soothsayers were summoned from Etruria, who unanimously declared that a civil war and the destruction of the state was thus betokened, and would occur, unless the gods were so appeased as to avert the destiny. Recourse was therefore had to scenic games, as usual, which were continued for ten successive days: and the diviners farther ordered that the statue of Jupiter should be made larger than before, and placed on an eminence, and turned

towards the opposite quarter, the rising sun: in hopes that, if that statue should look towards the east, and the forum and senate-house, it might bring to light the hidden plots then contriving against the republic. The designed alteration of the statue was accidentally delayed for two years, and the work was completed by Cicero on the very day when the discomfiture of the Catilinian conspiracy took place; so that at the same time when the workmen were employed in fixing the statue, the conspirators and witnesses were conveyed into the temple where the senate was assembled: an undeniable proof, says the Consul,* that to the omnipotence and foresight of Jupiter, we owe the preservation of the state.

The public worship of the Israelites presents a remarkable contrast to the errors into which the ancient heathens fell both on the right hand and the left: being free alike from the uncertainty of the philosophers, and from the immoralities which disgraced the worst of the popu-

* Catil. Orat. iii. prope finem.

lar services, or the superstitions which deformed the best. The doctrine of the Israelites maintained, as was before observed, that the Deity was to be worshipped and addressed as the Creator and Governor of the world, and as the father of his people: but that, as a spiritual Being, he could not be represented or adored under any visible form. This latter truth was so strongly impressed upon them, that they held every sort of image in the greatest abhorrence; and the first they so firmly believed, as to have recourse to prayer, and to pour their distresses into the unseen ear of the Creator, in every private misfortune; and in all public calamities they implored pardon and assistance in language which always appears sublime, but never more remarkably so, than when opposed to the absurdities of heathen supplication.

No more impartial specimen can be selected than the prayer used by Solomon at the dedication of the temple. It was extraordinary, it was public; and is, therefore, calculated to fur-

nish a just idea of the principles possessed generally by the Hebrews concerning the Deity, to whom they were now consecrating a magnificent building.

" Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord " in the presence of all the congregation of " Israel, and spread forth his hands toward " heaven: and he said, Lord God of Israel, " there is no God like thee, in heaven above or " on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and " mercy with thy servants that walk before thee " with all their heart. And now, O God of " Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, " which thou spakest unto thy servant David " my father. But will God indeed dwell on " the earth? Behold the heaven of heavens " cannot contain thee; how much less this house " that I have builded? Yet have thou respect " unto the prayer of thy servant and to his sup- " plication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto " the cry and to the prayer which thy servant " prayeth before thee to-day: that thine eyes " may be opened towards this house night and

" day, even towards the place of which thou " hast said, My name shall be there : that thou " mayest hearken unto the prayer that thy servant " shall make towards this place."*

It is evident from the whole of this sublime hymn, that the ideas impressed by Moses at the first institution of the Jewish polity, had lost none of their clearness by the lapse of five hundred years. It is evident that the belief implanted in them of the immediate presence of God with their armies and in the ark or tabernacle, had in no degree produced an erroneous notion of his attributes; that they could believe the immateriality and omnipresence of the Creator, notwithstanding the peculiar character he had condescended to assume, as going forth with the armies of Israel.

This, then, was the language of prosperity, " Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest " unto his people Israel :"† and if we turn to the language of adversity, we find it continuing

* 1 Kings viii. 22, et seq. † 1 Kings viii. 56.

unchanged in tone, and unshaken in confidence. The Old Testament abounds with proofs in point, and the book of Psalms, in particular, contains alone a series of overwhelming evidence; but on a subject so familiar and indisputable it will be sufficient simply to adduce the prayer composed by Hezekiah at the time when Jerusalem was endangered by the invasion of Sennacherib.

" Hezekiah received the letter from the hand
" of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah
" went up into the house of the Lord, and spread
" it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed
" before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of
" Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims,
" *thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the*
" *kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven*
" *and earth.* Lord, bow down thine ear, and
" hear; open, Lord, thine eyes, and see; and
" hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath
" set him to reproach the living God. Of a
" truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have de-
" stroyed the nations and their lands, and have

" cast their gods into the fire: *for they were no* " *gods, but the work of men's hands,* wood and " stone; therefore they have destroyed them. " Now, therefore, O Lord our God, save thou " us from out of his hand, that all the kingdoms " of the earth *may know that thou art the Lord* " *God, even thou only.*"*

It is evident, from these comparisons, that the superiority of the Hebrews in their practical worship of the Supreme Being is no less decisive than their abstract conception of his essence. Hezekiah neither consults an oracle, nor appeals to a variety of discordant deities; but with equal consistency and confidence, resorts, on the sudden appearance of danger, to the aid of that God whom he had learnt from his forefathers to venerate as both the Creator of the world, and the peculiar protector of his nation.

In this respect, again, all is conformable. What was the prevailing sentiment concerning the divine character was seen in the former

* Isaiah xxxvii. 14.

Section; and it appears from this, that the practice did not contradict the theory. Indeed, from the whole account which we possess of the Jewish history, which for the most part is sufficiently minute, it appears that that people never lost sight of the peculiar relation in which they stood towards the Creator. Their national prosperity is the divine blessing; their national misfortunes are the judgments of Heaven upon their disobedience.* Had there been no closer connexion or no stronger appearance of connexion between national faith and national

* See the whole history: and particularly Judges ii. 22; where the preservation of a remnant of the idolatrous nations is expressly attributed to the necessity of keeping a check upon the people who had "*transgressed the covenant* commanded unto their fathers." Ahijah's denunciation against Jeroboam is in this strain: "The Lord shall root up Israel "out of *this good land which he gave to their fathers*, and "shall scatter them beyond the river, *because they have* "*made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger.*" 1 Kings xiv. 15. The same spirit prevades the prophecies made to Manasseh: "*I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance,* "and deliver them into the hand of their enemies, and they "shall become a prey and spoil to all their enemies; *because* "*they have done that which was evil in my sight,*" &c. 2 Kings xxi. 15.

success, than we may suppose established by the fictitious assertions or vague promises of a legislator; misfortune, it is probable, would have had the contrary effect, would have diverted them from dependence on their law, instead of reviving their obedience. Such has been the case in other instances. Thucydides relates that during the plague which desolated Athens, the people finding no advantage from the public worship and ceremonies to which they had commonly resorted, at last abstained from them altogether, and gave themselves up to a desperate and unrestrained lawlessness.* But so effectually was the belief of divine interference impressed upon the Hebrew nation, that any general distress or remarkable calamity always served as a sort of signal to rally them round the faith of their forefathers. This is the outline of their whole history. And at the close of the theocracy, when the threatened vengeance upon repeated rebellion was accomplished by the destruction of the temple and captivity of the people, this event, which must have proved the confutation

* Lib. ii. s. 47.

of any unfounded reliance upon divine support, was deemed by the nation itself a confirmation of their whole history and peculiar covenant. The captive people saw, in the humiliation of their country, only the accomplishment of prophecy and the punishment of their transgressions, and looked forward for their restoration to repentance alone. Such is the confession of Ezra; "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up "my face to thee, my God; since the days of our "fathers have we been in a great trespass unto "this day; and *for our iniquities* have we, our "kings, and our priests, been delivered into "the hand of the kings of the lands, to the "sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to con-"fusion of face, as it is this day."* Such also is the solemn humiliation of the people after their return to Jerusalem, exhibiting as strong a conviction as language can express of the cause of their national misfortunes, and showing that their faith in the author of their law had been violated, but not destroyed. "Thou, even thou "art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the

* Ezra ix. 6.

" heaven of heavens, with all their host, the " earth, and all things that are therein, the seas " and all that is therein, and thou preservest " them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth " thee."* This sublime declaration, to which it would be vain to look for a parallel beyond the pale of revelation, is followed by a circumstantial review of the selection, the transgressions, and the punishment of the Hebrew nation; and whoever can read this confession, and still believe that the faith it expresses, which remained unimpaired through so many centuries and survived such heavy calamities, was originally grounded on a false assumption of legislative power, must have, to say the least, a very inadequate idea of the nature of moral evidence.

* Nehemiah ix. throughout.

SECTION VII.

On the Principles of Hebrew Morality.

I HAVE hitherto traced the superiority of the Mosaic law, in the principles it inculcated, and the practical worship it enjoined towards the Supreme Being. There is another light in which it remains to be viewed, viz. as a system of relative duties. It is probable, that from a consideration of this point also we may obtain some assistance to our inquiries. For although it is true that the great rules of morals, being necessary to the existence of human society, can be in no communities wholly unknown, and in civilized states have been generally well understood; yet it is likewise to be acknowledged, that a nation professing, like the Israelites, to live

under the immediate direction of divine Intelligence, would be expected to enforce a purer morality, to practise duties unknown to others, and to avoid errors admitted elsewhere. That this was the exact case among the Jews, many authors have made it their peculiar object to prove: and it would require a discussion evidently inapplicable to the business of the present Treatise, to elucidate the subject at large. It will be more to my purpose to point out an instance or two, in which there is not only a difference between the Jewish and other institutions, but precisely that difference which a sense of the immediate superintendence of the Deity would occasion.*

First, the authority which Moses exercises, and exercises to all appearance unconsciously, is of a sweeping and extensive nature unattempted by other legislators. In all other ci-

* The punishment of idolatry as a capital crime, is conformable to the general tenor of the Hebrew law, as a theocracy: in any other view, unaccountable. This has been treated at large by Warburton.

vilized communities the moralist and the lawgiver have had a separate character and province. The lawgiver forbids the overt act, and says, Thou shalt not steal; the moralist lays a restraint on the secret intention, and his language is, Thou shalt not covet. The lawgiver issues his decrees against such open vice as is injurious to society; the moralist does not stop there, but inculcates virtue. The lawgiver threatens punishment; the moralist goes farther, and holds out such rewards as are within his view; whether the approbation of conscience, or of good men, or of an all-seeing God; whether the elevation of the noblest faculties of the soul, or the certainty of future retribution. The laws of Solon and of the twelve tables established the rights of individuals, and provided against their open infringement; but it remained for Socrates and Cicero to prescribe personal duties; and to point out the many cases in which the morality of an action might be eminently defective, even whilst the letter of the law was precisely obeyed. Our modern statutes issue such enactments as the rights of

persons and of property require; but they leave it to the divine to enforce charity, and to repress covetousness or avarice on other, and widely different considerations.

If we analyze the matter, the reason will appear no less evident than the fact is notorious. The legislator is himself essentially the *subject* of the community; and the jealousy of the body whose minister he is, though it allows, or even invites his interference to restrain that ferociousness of individual liberty which would endanger peace or property, forbids his exercising any jurisdiction in cases where these are not concerned, or extending his power beyond absolute right to moral duties. The authority delegated to the lawgiver for the public good emanates from the public itself: but no man gives another a title to regulate his thoughts, or prescribe the moral virtues which he shall exercise. This jurisdiction must originate elsewhere. It is a matter of certainty, for example, that no one can be privileged to take forcibly another's property; but it cannot be so plainly determined, whether

he is bound to give his own in charity. You have a right, it will be argued, to forbid my robbing my neighbour; but you have no right to insist on my relieving him. The same argument holds true with regard to gratitude, humanity, &c.; which on that very account have been termed virtues of imperfect obligation, since they depend upon a nice balance of circumstances, and cannot be rendered imperative by the letter of any general law: it also holds true of the personal duties which concern the regulation of the heart; they are an affair between man and his own conscience, and their essential or non-essential obligation is left to the private judgment of the individual.

But, on the other hand, if we imagine the case of the Deity, as moral Governor of the world; prescribing a system of laws to any of his creatures, the difference between laws of perfect and imperfect obligation vanishes at once. A new principle is introduced of paramount authority. The public safety is no longer the professed object of legislation, and the natural rights of

mankind are no longer the limit of the legislator's power, who appears invested with other sovereignty than that which the people have intrusted to him, and with a higher title to his office than the consent of the community.

Supposing, therefore, the fact to be as pretended in the preamble to the Hebrew code, it were to be expected beforehand that the distinction usually preserved between rights and duties should be thrown down ; that the empire of the legislator should be exerted over the conscience, and that the same authority which prohibited vice shall command virtue.

In the provisions of the Hebrew law this antecedent expectation is completely answered. Moses is at the same time moralist and lawgiver: and in virtue of this double office united in his own person, he extends his jurisdiction to a variety of cases which are confessedly beyond the reach of other legislators. He prescribes charity and benevolence as required by the Creator, in the same tone with which he forbids

murder, theft, and false witness, crimes acknowledged to be injurious to the community. Nay, he even proceeds to regulate the thoughts.* Of this we have a familiar instance in the tenth commandment, which comprehensively lays an interdict against the very *coveting* or *desiring* any of the possessions of another; and issues this wise but singular injunction, philosophically wise as coming from a moralist, but exclusively singular as delivered by a legislator, with the same consciousness of undisputed authority as when he forbids the overt acts of theft or adultery, of which a covetous desire is the original germ.

Relying on the same support and instructed by the same oracle, the legislator of the Hebrews imposes a restraint upon the passions, which was not attempted in any other ancient country:†

* The reader will observe that I represent as the peculiarity in Moses, his making *the thoughts the subject of a law*, not his declaring the guilt to consist in the *intention*; a truth which reason seems very early and universally to have discovered.

† Joseph. contra Apion. ii. 30, &c.: and Eusebius, Præp. Evang. xiii. 20.

and which is equally striking, whether contrasted with the habits of the civilized Greeks, or the general libertinism of Asiatic nations. Moses proscribes, under the sanction of legislative authority and penalties, practices which we undoubtedly are taught by the light which Christianity has shed over our moral view to detest as criminal: but which few, even of the moralists of antiquity, and none of their lawgivers, either condemned by their sentence or discountenanced by their lives.* To enter into particulars on this head would be superfluous to those who are conversant with the defective morality of the heathen world, and to those who are not, unnecessarily disgusting.

Perhaps it may be supposed that the corruptions which had increased to so great a height before the æra of our acquaintance with ancient history, were the gradual progress of vice, and unknown to the earlier and purer age of the

* This subject has been treated at great length by Leland, Advantage of Revelation, part xi. chap. 3, &c.; also in Clarke's Evid. Prop. vi.

Hebrew legislation. This, however, is a favourable supposition to which human nature has no claim. On the contrary, the people are expressly warned that the vicious customs in which they are forbidden to indulge, are familiar both in the countries they had left and by which they were surrounded. Still further, they are assured that they are commissioned as the ministers of divine vengeance against the people of whose lands they took possession, because those nations were stained with those very enormities— "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these "things; *for in all these the nations are defiled* "*which I cast out before you, and the land is* "*defiled: therefore* I do visit the iniquity thereof "upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her "inhabitants."*

* Lev. xviii. 24. This seems a proper occasion to notice an objection which has been raised against the employment of the Israelites, "men, and moral agents," in destroying the Canaanites, when, "as moral agents, they ought not to have been unjust, cruel, or rapacious; but to have believed that God cannot delight in rapine, bloodshed, and robbery." This objection has been from time to time repeated, in defiance of the reasons stated on the very front of the narration

Indeed, many of the peculiar institutions of the Jews were ordained for the purpose of displaying to the peculiar people of divine choice, the real heinousness of that vicious indulgence of the passions, which scarcely seems to have troubled the conscience of the other nations of antiquity. "*Ye shall be holy unto me: for I* "*the Lord thy God am holy*, and have severed

itself, for which the guilty nations were extirpated: viz. their gross immoralities, and their idolatry, a vice which included (as Lowman has largely and successfully shown) many heinous species of wickedness. The Israelites, therefore, living as they did under the immediate direction of the Supreme Being, when they were specially employed to wield the sword of divine justice against a guilty race, would see in the dispensation of which they were the appointed ministers, not the violation, as is rashly insinuated, but the fulfilment of moral justice; and the practical lesson they would imbibe, would be an awful conviction of the severity with which the moral Governor of the world, who is uniformly represented in their Scriptures as *just* as well as *merciful*, treats wickedness and punishes idolatry. It was a fearful example of the destiny inpending over themselves, should they fall into the practices, and commit the abominations, which they had been specifically enjoined to avenge in others. And their subsequent history proved the intention of the lesson, though its effect was too often lost upon their conduct.

"you from other people that ye should be "mine."* This is the spirit of the code, and preserved by particular provisions with the minutest care, and an intimate knowledge of the human heart, which requires that the root of vice should be extirpated, and not its branches lopped; that impurity should be checked at its source, before it begins to flow. Knowing too, as we are happily taught to know, the effect of sensuality in alienating the heart from all that is most dignified in human nature, we cannot but admire the rigour with which Moses opposes it, and the barrier which he raises in that unimproved and infant state, between the practice of those that have the Lord for their God, and those who follow the devices of their own hearts. But the authority which he employs for this salutary purpose, and the union of moral and civil duties which his code contains, together with the superior tone of virtue which it inculcates, are evident proofs that his power was neither self-assumed, nor delegated by the people, and that his com-

* Lev. xx. 26.

munity were well aware that he acted as the vicegerent of Him whose will alone was to be the standard of their law.

Secondly, it is strictly natural, that legislators professing only that general notion of some superior power, which I have all along considered as common to every civilized people, should, in enacting their laws, make the probable welfare of the state their leading object; and imagine themselves bound to keep this alone in view, even setting aside, in particular cases, the general rules of morals, and rights of individuals. Whoever reads the first chapter of Xenophon's treatise on the Polity of Lacedæmon, or the fifth book of Plato's Republic, will find this professed as the sole principle of legislation. By the laws of Lycurgus, the free choice of love was subject to the restraint of the lawgiver's ordinances, that a strong and hardy race might be ready to defend the state.* Modesty was banished from the female sex, lest any weakness should be perpetuated

* Xen. Laced. Pol. p. 169, Simson.

among their offspring ;* and even chastity was annulled, and the rights of husbands violated, that disparities of age might cause no degeneracy in the progeny of Sparta.† Nor was the philosopher more delicate than the statesman. Plato recommends the attainment of the same object by similar means.

These infringements of morality have been often censured. I would direct more particular attention to the custom of exposing such

* Id. 368. Δρόμου καὶ ἰσχύος, ὥσπερ καὶ τοῖς ἄνδρασιν, οὕτω καὶ ταῖς θηλείαις ἀγῶνας πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἐποίησε, νομίζων ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων ἰσχυρῶν καὶ τὰ ἔκγονα ἐρρωμενέστερα γίγνεσθαι. This is well censured by Eusebius, Præp. Evang. xiii. 19.

† Id. 170. Εἰ δέ τις γυναικὶ μὲν συνοικεῖν μὴ βούλοιτο, τέκνων δὲ ἀξιολόγων ἐπιθυμοίη, καὶ τούτῳ νόμιμον ἐποίησεν, ἤν τινα ἄν ἔυτεκνον καὶ γεννάιαν ὁρᾷη, πείσαντα τὸν ἔχοντα, ἐκ ταύτην τεκνοποιεῖσθαι. This is farther enlarged upon by Plutarch in his life of Lycurgus, p. 105, 1. Mr. Mitford describes this with his usual fidelity: " His morality (speaking of Lycurgus) was always made *subservient to his political purposes.* To be unmarried and without children for the commonwealth, he caused to be accounted shameful; but it was indifferent who was the father, provided the child were a fine one." Vol. i. 305.

children as the parents thought themselves unable to maintain, or who were oppressed by bodily infirmities, which was admitted as legitimate, and practised without remorse both in Greece and at Rome. But the Spartan legislator, considering the state as a common mother, and individuals as comparatively without a right, would not even leave the decision to the parents. In Sparta, all new-born infants were examined by public officers appointed for the purpose; the well-formed and vigorous only were preserved: those who appeared unlikely to be serviceable to the state, owing to any defect in bodily shape or constitution, were buried in a cavern of mount Taygetus.* Custom had so far reconciled the consciences of men to this practice, however barbarous, that Plato, even where he is describing an imaginary republic, which he might therefore have moulded to his will, makes exposure the express provision for those chil-

* Plut. Vit. Lyc. i. 106, ed. Br. (This law is not mentioned by Xenophon.) Suet. Aug. c. lxv. Vit. Cal. vii. De illustr. Gr. xxi. Juven. vi. 601. Cicer. de Leg. 1. 3, ch. viii.

dren, whose parents' ages did not conform to the period appointed by the laws.*

A priori, no nation was more likely to have admitted this usage than the Hebrews. They married early. When their laws were enacted, they were an unsettled people, nor were they at liberty to provide in other countries for the redundant population of their own. Had the circumstances of the state alone been considered, nothing would appear more probable than the introduction of a custom which permitted the intercourse of marriage without requiring the burden of domestic poverty; which provided for the indulgence of the passions, without oppressing the state with useless and

* Plautus, in the Cistellaria, of which the scene lies in Sicyon, speaks familiarly of the practice. In the Andria of Terence (the scene of which lies at Athens) it is ridiculed as extravagant folly, that Pamphilus was determined to bring up his child by Glycerium:

Quicquid pepererit, decreverunt tollere.
Inceptio est amentium, haud amantium.

See Hume, Populousness of ancient Nations; Malthus, i. 288; Philopatris Warwicensis, vol. ii.; Millar's Origin of Ranks, 125. 134.

hungry mouths. If Moses, therefore, like other legislators, had considered his people as existing for themselves, and as permitted to consult in their civil code their own interests and strength alone, we may reasonably suppose that he would have countenanced a practice, which other more civilized states admitted, and philosophers did not think unworthy of their sanction.*

But when it is understood that an infant is born subject to the will and disposal, not of the state, but of God, and belonging not only to an earthly parent, but to an heavenly protector; it becomes clear that any ordinance which legalizes the destruction of an innocent human being, is not less impious than barbar-

* Aristotle, Polit. 7, c. 16, after observing, that *διὰ πληθος τέκνων, ἐὰν ἡ τάξις τῶν ἐθῶν κωλύῃ μηδὲν ἀποτίθεσθαι τῶν γιγνομένων, ὡρίσθαι καὶ δεῖ τῆς τεκνοποίιας τὸ πλῆθος·* adds, under certain circumstances, *ἐμποιεῖσθαι δεῖ τὴν ἄμβλωσιν.*—Romulus and Lycurgus, like Aristotle and Plato, the two real as well as the two imaginary legislators, assume the right of determining the number of each family. Dion. Halicar. ii. 88, Sylburg.

ous. This was apparent to Plato himself on another occasion, when he required an argument against suicide; and it is curious to observe from such an instance, how little even the most philosophical mind is able to follow a consistent line of steady practice through the various bearings of human action, if the foundation of authoritative rules is wanting. "Man," says Socrates by the pen of Plato, "is in the possession of the gods." * A conviction of this truth, not occasional and speculative, but effective and habitual, will alone account for the superior morality of the Jewish law.† If an infant

* Phædo. From him Cic. Tusc. Disp. i. 30, Vetat dominans ille in nobis Deus, injussu hinc suo nos demigrare, &c. Vide et Somn. Scip.

† Ὁ νόμος γυναιξὶν ἀπεῖπεν μήτ' ἀμβλοῦν τὸ σπαρὲν, μήτε διαφθείρειν· ἀλλὰ ἦν φανείη, τεκνοκτόνος ἂν εἴη ψυχὴν ἀφανίζουσα, καὶ τὸ γένος ἐλαττοῦσα. Joseph. contra Apion. ii. 24. Vide et Phil. Jud. ii. 318. It appears clearly from the language of these two authors, as well as from the national practice, that the Jews gave a just interpretation to the seventh commandment, and extended its obligation to infanticide. Doubtless, the expectation of the Messiah had its influence as well as the general law against murder. But the sacred importance in which human life is invariably held throughout

is born for his country only, and his parents submit to live under the established laws; it is for his country to dispose of him, according to the legislator's notions of his utility.* But if there is a supreme Creator, as was believed and acted upon by the Jews, according to whose will each individual is ushered into the world, and to whom he is accountable, human existence rises inestimably in value; and a new law becomes obligatory, paramount to the supposed necessity of confining the level of population within the standard of subsistence. The practice, therefore, of infanticide may be considered to a certain degree as a test of national faith; † since it is impossible, wherever it pre-

the history, shows that this alone would be an insufficient explanation of the fact.

* Πρῶτον μέν οὖν οὐκ ἰδίους ἡγεῖτο τῶν πατέρων τους παῖδας, ἀλλα κοινους τῆς πόλεως ὁ Λυκοῦργος. Plut. Vit. Lyc. 105.

† A negative indeed, rather than a positive test. The Thebans, with a religion no purer than the other Grecians possessed, punished infanticide with death. Ælian. Var. Hist. ii. 7. And Tacitus records of the ancient Germans, numerum liberorum finire, aut quenquam ex agnatis (forte, natis) necare flagitium habetur. The custom was first for-

vails, that the belief of a Supreme Disposer of events should exist in any distinctness or purity.

Thirdly, whoever enacts or sanctions a law, is offended when it is broken. If God has appointed rules by which mankind are to be governed, God will avenge the infringement of those rules; if the state has the sole direction of moral actions, the violation of her commands is only cognizable by the state.* We must expect, therefore, among a people professing a sense of a superintending Deity, not only a purer morality, as has been already shown, but different *motives* to the practice of morality. And, in fact, offences which with other nations are treated merely as hurtful either to the society, or the offender himself, were considered by the Jews as committed against

bidden in the Roman empire by an express law by Valens and Gratian. Reimar on Dio Cass. b. i. par. 16. This difference between the practice of the Jews and other nations is also remarked by Tacitus: augendæ multitudini consulitur; necare quenquam ex agnatis (forte, natis) nefas. Hist. l. 5.

* Plato argues this point, de Rep. l. 4.

God ;* while obedience to his will was also enforced as the proper motive of virtue, his favour as its proper reward.

I would not be understood to deny that there existed among the ancients a sort of vague and general feeling, that justice, patriotism, and some of the other virtues were agreeable to the superior powers, and the contrary vices the objects of their displeasure. This notion, however received, whether the result of enlightened reason, or the remains of original revelation, appears as the ground of some of the arguments attributed to Socrates by his disciples ; † and

* "Those who believe that God overlooks their lives, cannot venture to sin." Jos. contra Apion. 11. 16. See Lev. xix. 2.

† Crito, pag. 54, ad fin. Phædo, 84, do. In the treatise de Repub. Cephalus says, that when a man finds his end approaching, he begins to feel an alarm, which had never come across him in the former part of his life; for, the fables concerning the dead, that one who has done wrong here, must be called to account below ; fables laughed at till then ; begin to affect his mind lest they should possibly be true. l. i. p. 330, St. This passage is of the same character with the remarkable one in the preface to Zaleucus's laws; enjoining those who have evil inclinations, "to set before

is more familiarly observable in the vague and undefined belief of future rewards and punish-

their eyes the season of their departure from life; since repentance is wont to come upon all when they are on the point of death, and recollect the instances of their injustice with a wish that they had acted uprightly." Stob. Sem. 42. Upon this subject the later philosophy is very inferior to the earlier. The Latin writers were corrupted by the prevalence of the Stoic doctrines, according to which, it was beneath the Deity to take cognizance of human transgressions. Cicero says, "Hoc quidem commune est omnium philosophorum, nunquam nec irasci Deum, nec nocere.—Quod affirmatè, quasi Deo teste, promiseris, id tenendum est: jam enim non ad iram deorum, quæ nulla est; sed ad justitiam et ad fidem pertinet." De Off. iii. 28, 29. His familiar opinions in his epistles, tend to the same point, l. v. 12, vi. 3. Epictetus and Seneca argue decisively in the same strain. The latter says, "No man in his senses would fear the gods, as it is folly to dread beneficial objects." Late as Marcus Antoninus wrote, he speaks of the resurrection of the soul as a matter of great uncertainty, and of very inconsiderable interest. "You have made your voyage, and arrived at your port. Go ashore: *if* into another life, the gods are there: *if* into a state of insensibility, you will be no longer distracted by pains and pleasures, nor be in subjection to this mean vessel." De Rebus suis, l. iii. c. 3. It is needless to add, that the opinion concerning the nature of the soul as making a part of a celestial substance to which after the dissolution of the body it was to be restored, is entirely destructive of a belief of future rewards and punishments, be-

ments which made a part, at least, of the poetical creed. And this belief, however inconsistent and obscured by fable, may be supposed to have checked in some degree the glaring and indisputable crimes of fraud, violence, and rapacity. But its effect did not at all extend to the personal virtues. Respecting these, the ancients universally considered themselves as free from any obligation or restraint, except that which their own prudence or inclination might impose. Thus, Plato speaks of drunkenness as a crime from which the guardians of his republic must abstain, not as a crime in itself, but "because it suits any one rather than a guardian of a country, to forget the land he is in, through intoxication."* And, generally, the best of the ancients,

cause it removes all idea of individuality. These are the probable grounds of Aristotle's opinion, who makes death the boundary, beyond which neither good nor evil is to be looked for. Πέρας γὰρ· καὶ οὔδεν ἔν τῷ τεθνεῶτι δοκεὶ ὄυτε ἀγαθον ὄυτε κακὸν εἶναι. Ethic. lib. iii.

* De Rep. l. iii. p. 218, Massey. The same line of argument is pursued through the other vices, l. iv. 311, &c. It appears, from another passage in the same treatise, how little the favour of the superior powers was supposed to depend

if they acknowledge a branch of moral duty, speak of it as an offence against themselves. In the celebrated advice, where he recommends his disciples to review the actions of the past day, Pythagoras says, "for what you have done ill, be sorry: rejoice for the good you have performed."* On the contrary, in a passage which keeps up a continual strain of high morality, Job† is represented as asking, "If I despise "the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-"servant, when they contend with me; what "shall I do when *God riseth up*, and when *he* "*visiteth*, what shall I answer him?"

So also in his Proverbs, Solomon enforces chastity on a principle as unknown to the ancients, as the virtue itself, namely, "that *the* "*ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord;*

upon morality, and how little practical influence any idea of the pleasure or displeasure of the deities exercised over the actions of the best heathens. See Glaucon's argument, Rep. l. 2.

* Δειλὰ δε ἐκπρὴξας, ἐπιπλήσσεο· χρηστὰ δε, τέρπου. Aur. Carm.

† Chap. xxxi. 13.

" and *he pondereth all his goings.*"* Where shall we find a parallel to the advice of Tobit to his son?† "Fear not, my son, that we are " made poor; for thou hast much wealth, *if* " *thou fear God*, and depart from all sin, and " do that which is well pleasing *in his sight.* " *Be mindful of the Lord thy God* all thy days, " and let not thy will be set to sin, or to *trans-* " *gress his commandments.*" These were practical enforcements of the words of Moses: who uniformly represents the divine will as the standard, and the divine purity as the motive of moral duties; who says to the nation at large, Ye shall be holy, *for I the Lord thy God am holy:* who prohibits fraud, because all that commit it, "and do unrighteously, are an *abo-* " *mination unto the Lord thy God:*" and who sanctions civil punishments, on the ground that the soul "which doeth aught presumptuously, " whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, " the same *reproacheth the Lord.*"‡ This superiority, peculiar to the Hebrew nation, was

* Chap. v. 21. † Tobit iv. 5—25.

‡ Lev. xx. 26. Deut. xxv. 16. Num. xv. 30.

at the same time observed and explained by Josephus: who remarks, that Moses differed from other philosophers in not making piety a distinct virtue, but all virtues, as temperance, patience, justice, a part of piety: all our actions, pursuits and discourses, having a reference to a right deportment towards God.*

Fourthly, the grounds on which humanity both towards strangers and countrymen is sanctioned in the Mosaic law, belong to the same principles which pervade the other ordinances. That hostile spirit which several ancient writers attribute to the Jews, had no other foundation in the code of laws under which they lived, than as far as those laws forbade their intercourse with idolaters. The principles on which they were enjoined to practise humanity and charity, while they recognise the facts of their early history, derive a moral lesson from them to which the other nations of antiquity furnish a contrast instead of a counterpart. "Thou "shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him;

* Contra Apion. ii. 16.

"*for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.*
" Thou shalt not pervert the *judgment of the*
" *stranger* nor of the fatherless, nor take the
" widow's garment to pledge. *But thou shalt*
" *remember that thou wert a bondman in the land*
" *of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee*
" *thence; therefore I command thee to do this*
" *thing.*"*

The practice of antiquity towards those *strangers*, whom the chance of war or the hardships of fortune had reduced to dependence, was in strong opposition to this benevolent spirit which considers the common relation borne by all mankind towards a Creator, and founds the social duties on that universal basis. By the Romans, and throughout Greece, slaves were considered as absolute property, and the supposed interest of the master was the sole law which regulated the usage they received.†

* Deut. xxiv. 17.

† " The custom of exposing old, useless, or sick slaves in an island of the Tiber, there to starve, seems to have been pretty common in Rome. It was the professed maxim of the

The laws respecting them assumed, that they were an inferior order of beings, and provided

elder Cato, to sell his superannuated slaves for any price, rather than maintain what he esteemed an useless burden. The ergastula, or dungeons, where slaves in chains were forced to work, were very common all over Italy. Columella advises that they be always built under ground. A chained slave for a porter was usual in Rome." Hume, Essay xi.; where much more is to be found to the same purpose. " Le Senatus-Consulte Sillanien et d'autres loix établirent que lors qu'un maitre seroit tué, tous les esclaves qui etoient sur le même toit, ou dans un lieu assez près de la maison pour qu'on put entendre la voix d'un homme, seroient sans distinction condamnés à la mort." Mont. xv. 15. The treatment of slaves in Greece was, if possible, worse. They were forbidden by the laws to practise any liberal art. Even at Athens, where their situation was reckoned comparatively secure, Demosthenes says, that where it was possible to produce for the same fact either freemen or slaves as witnesses, judges always preferred *the torturing of slaves*, as a more certain evidence. Hume, Ess. xi. The institutions of Lycurgus, however, are the most abominable in this respect. " Never was human nature degraded by system to such a degree as in the miserable Helots. Every imaginable method was taken to set them at the widest distance from their haughty masters. Even vice was commanded to them; they were compelled to drunkenness, for the purpose of exhibiting to the young Lacedæmonians the ridiculous and contemptible condition to which men are reduced by it. They were forbidden every thing manly, and they were commanded every

that they should remain so; nurtured the younger citizens in the belief that their morality was of no account, and their lives of no higher value than that which their master or the state attached to them. What a contrast does the Syllanian law at Rome, or the legalized Crypteia at Sparta present to the commandment of Moses; "Thou shalt not *oppress* an hired servant that

thing humiliating, of which man is capable, while beasts are not." As to the Crypteia, "the most active and intelligent young Lacedæmonians were occasionally sent into the country, carrying provisions, and armed with a dagger. They dispersed, and generally lay concealed during the day, that they might with more advantage in the night execute their commission for reducing the number of the Helots, by murdering any they met, but selecting in preference the stoutest men, and those in whom any superiority of spirit or genius had been observed." Mitf. Greece, i. 317. On the other hand, "the penal code of the Jews guarded the person of the servant and the slave, as well as of the freeman: and the injunction, 'Whosoever smiteth a man, that he die, shall 'surely be put to death,' equally protected all." Dr. Graves, i. 270. Montesquieu blames as severe one of the laws of Moses, Ex. xxi. 20. But it appears evidently from the context, that the law previously quoted was of universal extent, v. 12; and the special law which succeeds it only applied to those who inflicted just punishment, and without evil intention, but with blameable and punishable severity.

" is poor and needy, whether he be of thy " brethren, or of the strangers that are within " thy gates, *lest he cry against thee unto the Lord,* " *and it be sin unto thee.**

It must be observed, that the right claimed by Moses to direct his people and prescribe their conduct in matters which might seem to belong only to private obligation, is founded on the assumption that the bounty of God, peculiarly extended to the Hebrews, was the origin of all their prosperity, and entitled his vicegerent to require what terms he chose in return. " If thy " brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay " with thee, *then thou shalt relieve him: take* " *thou no usury of him, or increase, but fear thy* " *God.* I am the Lord your God, which brought " you forth out of the land of Egypt, *to give* " *you the land of Canaan.*"† A similar exhortation in Deuteronomy is enforced on similar

* Ex. xxii. 31. The same spirit is to be seen Deut. xv. throughout: and the impression it fixed on the character of the people may be traced as far as Nehemiah, chap. v.

† Levit. v.

considerations: "If thy brother, an Hebrew man "or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and "serve thee six years; then in the seventh year "thou shalt let him go free: and thou shalt not "let him go away from thee empty: thou shalt "furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out "of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press; *of that* "*wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee* "*thou shalt give unto him.* And thou shalt re- "member that thou wast a bondman in the land "of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed "thee; therefore I command thee this thing "to-day."*

Here it is material to remark, that in the points of difference between the Hebrews and other nations, there is not only an actual superiority, but precisely that superiority which might be expected to result from the cause in question. The morality is purer in itself; and its advantage is exactly on that side where the origin it claims would lead us to expect it: in the rules prescribed for the government of the passions, and

* Deut. xv. 12.

in what concerns the relief and treatment of our fellow-men, and the value of their lives in the eye of their Creator. This is the superiority we should look for in a code which professes not to proceed from the fallible reason of man, deducing rules from the apparent advantage of society, and squaring his moral enactments according to his views of utility; but to be derived from a moral governor, who is holy, and demands the service of a holy nation. Accordingly, in the vices that are forbidden, and in the duties that are enjoined, we find the same object kept in sight, and a reference perpetually maintained to God, as the legislator and judge from whom every thing emanated, and to whose will every thing ought to conform. The morality is conformable to the purity of belief; and the purer belief accounts for the peculiar excellence of the morality.

All the collateral circumstances, therefore, belonging to the Hebrew character, into which I have successively inquired, tend to the same conclusion. From the opinions respecting the

Creator prevalent among the Hebrews, and from the peculiar relation he was believed to bear towards them, resulted a species of literature almost exclusively their own in its nature, and entirely so in its excellence. The same belief accompanies and spiritualizes their national worship, and inspires their personal devotions; the same belief pervades and regulates their morality. If no account existed of the introduction and reception of this belief, not forming the opinion of the philosophers, or a detached sect of philosophers, but the settled faith of the whole people; its singularity would offer a reasonable subject of wonder and inquiry. The account, however, given by the Hebrews themselves, is sufficient to explain, not only the existence of their peculiar belief, but its universality and effect. Unless we give up all claim to reasonable consistency, we must either admit the recorded account of the phenomenon, or suggest some other means, by which Moses might have been rendered different from all other legislators, and the Hebrews distinguished in their faith beyond all other nations. It will be a proper conclu-

sion of my argument, if I can succeed in showing, in the following sections, the difficulties which encounter those who, on any grounds they may choose to select, dispute the divine commission of Moses, or deny that he had the advantage of a revelation.

SECTION VIII.

Whether Moses could have invented the Doctrine he taught concerning the Creation.

If the history of the constitution of the world, on which Moses laid the foundation of his law, were not derived from the authentic source to which it pretends, there are three several ways in which its appearance may be accounted for: it must either have been devised by himself, as the most clear and rational; or secondly, borrowed by him from the Egyptians, and embodied in his own legislative code; or, lastly, must have been adopted and reduced into form from the generally prevailing opinions of his own nation. It will be proper, therefore, to consider attentively each of these possible ex-

planations; especially as none of them exhibit at first sight, that appearance of improbability, which we shall find, on inquiry, belonging to them all.

I have already admitted the likelihood, that Moses, considered as a mere political legislator, should be anxious to impress upon his infant people the belief of a Creator, whose omnipotence formed and whose providence maintains the universe, supposing him convinced of it himself. But it may justly be doubted whether the resources of his own or of any human reason, unassisted by traditional history originally derived from revelation, could ever have furnished Moses with that distinct proposition which first arrests our attention in the opening of the book of Genesis: "In the beginning "God created the heaven and the earth."

It may indeed appear probable to those, who, from the fortune of their birth and education, have been accustomed to draw the habitual inference of a Creator from his visible

works, that a declaration equivalent to that of Moses, would be the spontaneous result of a reasonable and reflecting mind. It is true that such a result seems insensibly to arise from the appearance of a world, which in every part displays proofs of an omnipotent Intelligence, incalculably exceeding the limits, not merely of our comprehension, but even of our imagination. That atheism, properly so called, is an error chiefly of speculative minds, appears clearly from the fact, that when we attempt to disseminate the purer doctrines of our religion among uncivilized tribes, the difficulty consists rather in unteaching prior false notions concerning superior beings, than in proving their existence.

But although it cannot be denied, that the being of one intelligent Creator is a proposition so congenial and satisfactory to our minds when offered to them, that for many ages it was believed innate; and that it bears so well the test of reason, as almost to seem its unpremeditated result; yet we are by no means warranted by

experience in saying, that the human mind, when left to itself, has generally been found to embrace it, or human reason to ascertain and establish the discovery. In arguing concerning the natural capacity of the human understanding, we should act very erroneously in assuming the present state of our knowledge as a criterion. A close acquaintance with the ancients, both in their philosophical and moral writings, and also in their familiar and practical opinions, can alone enable us to judge how much has been added to the first principles of religious belief by the diffusion of Christianity.* In fact, however, we have no other sure mode of appreciating the powers of human reason to form or disseminate sublime ideas on the relation between the

* A regular attempt to prove the claims of natural religion has been made by Wollaston, though with no intention to discredit revelation. But Dr. Ireland very truly observes, that "notwithstanding all his efforts on the side of unassisted reason, Wollaston could not descend to the level of nature. He was too well instructed by Christianity, not to feel its influence even against his own purpose. The suggestions of his reason are tinged with revelation; and the standard which he establishes for the religion of nature, is of a height which Plato never reached." Lect. vii.

world and its Creator, between God and man, than by examining what in former ages reason, when confessedly unassisted, was actually able to perform; and the close acquaintance with the most civilized states of antiquity which we derive from their writings, enables us to make this examination, both with respect to the philosophical and the popular belief, with less chance of error than would arise from reasoning á priori.

It appears from history, both sacred and profane, that, within a few centuries after the deluge, idolatry had become very general among mankind; either to the total exclusion of a purer worship, or in that milder form which added the veneration of fictitious deities to an acknowledgment of a Supreme Creator. The necessity of seeking habitations, and settlements, and subsistence, soon depressed, it is probable, whatever degree of cultivation may be supposed antecedent to the flood: the barbarous mode of life which accompanies an unsettled state, and the vices which deform it, would soon degrade that clear view of justice which is ne-

cessary to the notion of a moral governor; while stupid ignorance could not long retain the conception of an immaterial Creator. At the same time, among the more reflecting and enlightened, the wonders of the creation; among the uninformed and illiterate and guilty multitude, the terror which attends storms and earthquakes, and the various phænomena of nature, combine to preserve an idea, if not of an overruling providence, at least of more than human power. It is in this state of man, and of the human mind, that all those superstitions and various forms of idolatry arise, which were once nearly universal through the known world;* which still remain in full force over a

* Not only Clarke and Leland, who considered this subject without hypothesis; but even Cudworth agrees, that "the pagans in general, even the most refined of them, concurred in these two things: first, in breaking and crumbling the one simple Deity, and multiplying it into many gods, or parcelling it out into several particular notions, according to its several powers and virtues; and then in theologizing the whole world, and deifying the nature of things, accidents, and inanimate bodies: they supposing God to pervade all things, and himself to be in a manner all things." p. 532. To which I add, that, as the worship of these several parts,

large part of it, and of which the traces and vestiges in every country are continually exciting the research of the learned and curious. The idea of spiritual worship, such as is paid to a being known only to the imagination, not only requires a considerable advance in religion, but in cultivation also; we cannot, therefore, wonder, that unenlightened minds, more timid from their ignorance, retaining or acquiring the notion of super-human power, but utterly unable to comprehend an immaterial God, should fall into gross idolatry: not, as I conceive, believing, or, at least, not generally believing, that the images which they themselves had formed were either sensible or powerful; but proposing to themselves a visible object, to which they might fix their attention and direct their prayers.

Some of the ancient nations, more fortunate than the rest, found this visible object in the

powers, and virtues, was consequent upon abstracting them, a confusion was immediately introduced, sufficient to obscure altogether the originally pure theology.

sublime parts of the creation:* and we may observe, that in the Asiatic kingdoms, which appear to have arrived earliest at civilization, the sun and heavenly bodies formed the sole objects of worship.

The polytheism of the Greeks and Romans took a different turn; its foundation was laid in the supposed elements of the universe, and the strongest passions or qualities of the human mind; over all which a particular deity was believed to preside, and to excite or control them according to the various purposes of his dominion. Among these Jupiter, being ruler of the air, was represented as possessing superior power.† Upon this original divine synod (the

* Eusebius (Præ. Evang. l. i. p. 307) asserts, that this was originally the universal worship, and that idols, and the various heathen divinities, were a subsequent invention.

† The apparent regularity of this system has induced some great authorities to explain the whole of the heathen mythology by allegorical interpretation; and this was the resource of the pagans themselves when they were pressed by the absurdities of their faith upon the advance of philosophy and truth, as may be seen in Eusebius, passim. This

dii majores) was engrafted the race of heroes, who from time to time became illustrious in the world, or useful to their own nation; whose qualities and exploits being delivered to posterity by tradition, were magnified by the zeal of their countrymen, or the fancies of poetical imagination.

A national religion which accidental circumstances, concurring with superstitious ignorance, have thus once contributed to establish, is powerfully defended by that tide of prejudice which always opposes the change of popular and ancient customs, but sets particularly strong in favour of religious habits. When, therefore, civilization increases, and more enlightened understandings begin to pierce the mist which envelopes all that relates to superior powers, they

is, however, to ascribe philosophy to a period when philosophy was unknown. Similar superstitions in many parts of Britain may acquaint us that men in a very rude state are likely to conceive the air, or the sea, or the earth, to be haunted or governed by a fiend or god; and attribute their danger, or remarkable phænomena, to his anger and influence.

have to encounter not only the clamours, but often the weapons, of prejudiced ignorance, which treats every deviation from the popular superstitions as apostacy.*

* Much has been argued about the toleration of the ancients. It seems now very generally agreed, that this toleration was a readiness to admit any new deity into their catalogue. Socrates and Aristotle afford a decisive proof that their toleration was by no means unlimited. They allowed private opinions, and were not scrupulous with regard to the notions held by philosophical sects: but even the Epicureans, whose doctrines were openly hostile to all the sacrifices and public offices of religion, obeyed their country's rites, and abstained from attempting to abrogate established ordinances. Though the death of Socrates may be partly ascribed to political motives, and the banishment of Aristotle to the "rancorous malignity" (as Dr. Gillies says) of private enemies, the punishment of Stilpo and Diagoras sufficiently shows that the state guarded vigilantly her religious belief: and it must be remembered by those who represent the ancient toleration as complete, that, whatever was the *cause* of the fate of Aristotle and Socrates, a non-compliance with their country's laws was the *plea* employed against them; (see Diog. Laert;) and that the accusation under which the latter was indicted of impiety, was rebutted, not by an appeal to his rational sentiments on religion, but to his conformity with the senseless worship of his countrymen. Xen. Mem. l. 1. This subject is discussed at large by Taylor on the Civil law, and Bentley, Philel. Lips.

This may be considered as, in part, the reason why those philosophers of antiquity, whose good sense discovered to them the absurdity of the national worship, conformed in public to what they privately condemned; so that the licentious festival of a popular deity sometimes gave occasion to those refined discourses, in which sublime truth was approached at least, if not attained, and disclosed to a select party of disciples. But another and a still stronger reason is to be found in the obscurity and contradictory nature of their own opinions. Even if prudential motives had not withheld them from disturbing the established faith, this uncertainty must have prevented them either from undertaking the attempt at all, or from succeeding in it, if undertaken. Those who have most studied the perplexities of ancient philosophy will be most forward to agree with me in asserting, that it is vain to seek there for a declaration, express and positive, like that of Moses, of the independent existence and unity of the Creator. Among the various sects into which philosophers were divided, and the still more

opposite opinions which they maintained, no one proposed this as their distinguishing tenet, or appropriated such a doctrine to themselves.*

It is, no doubt, true, that very sublime conceptions of the divine nature have been transmitted to us, from some of the theistical philosophers, and, sparkling as detached sentences from the obscure metaphysical speculations by which they are surrounded, form the most interesting relics of antiquity. It was a saying of Thales, according to Diogenes Laertius, "that God is the most ancient of all things, for he is unbegotten; the world the most beautiful, as being the work of God." In the Phædo of Plato, Socrates gives this sublime opinion: "I conceive that there is something independently and by itself excellent, and good, and great, and

* Even Socrates cannot be excepted. In the account which Xenophon gives of his discourse with Aristodemus, where he is asserting a providence, the expressions *θεὸς* and *θεοὶ* are used promiscuously; and in the *Ἀπολογία*, where Plato professes to declare his master's sentiments, he acknowledges the sun, and moon, and stars, as gods, condemning, in strong terms, the contrary doctrine of Anaxagoras.

all things else; and if there is any other thing excellent besides this excellence itself, that it is in no other way excellent, than either by the presence or participation, or by some assistance, of whatever nature, of that excellence."* Aristotle has left us this among many similar sentences: "God possesses every thing that is good, and is self sufficient;"† and his scholar, Theopompus, defines the Deity as "that first and divinest being, which willeth every thing that is best."‡ "God can only be understood by us (says Cicero) as some mind, unconnected and free, separated from every mortal admixture, perceiving and moving every thing."§ Plutarch‖ has preserved to us the inscription of an Egyptian temple at Sais, which declared of the Deity, "I am whatever has been and is, and shall be: and my veil no mortal has ever drawn aside."

* P. 100, Steph. This being, he elsewhere in the same dialogue calls, the one the, good, and wise God.

† Πάντα τ' ἔχει ἄγαθα ὁ θεὸς, καὶ ἐστιν ἀντάρκης. Mag. Mor. ii. 15.

‡ Τὸ πρῶτον καὶ θειότατον, πάντα τὰ ἄριστα βουλόμενος.

§ Tusc. Quæst. 1.

‖ De Osiride et Iside.

These and similar passages (though I have introduced the clearest of those whose antiquity can be depended upon, which have fallen in my way) are surely valuable as displaying the efforts of superior reason to expand itself, while labouring under the weight of an absurd mythology. Considered separately, they might seem to justify an opinion which has been rashly asserted, that some of the enlightened Greeks were pure monotheists.* These sen-

* I am well aware that Cudworth, Stillingfleet, Prideaux, and Warburton, (in his dissertation on the Mysteries,) in order to do imaginary homage to religion, took this ground, which is now chiefly maintained by those who wish to depreciate the internal evidence of the Mosaic law. But I am convinced, that, however truth might occasionally break out, or transpire through tradition, so that single passages may be found to give colour to such an opinion; yet it was no where so distinctly understood, as to be applicable to a system, or furnish a rational account of the creation. The contrary opinion has been sufficiently refuted by Leland.

Eusebius, Præp. Evang. asserts the peculiarity, and at the same time the rationality, of the Hebrew faith, as to the creation, which he allows to have been approached by Plato alone. He ridicules Diodorus for not even introducing the name of a Deity in his Cosmogony; and Thales and others, ἢ δημιουργὸν, ἢ ποιητὴν τινα τῶν ὅλων ανατησαμενους. L. 1. et 15.

tences, however, only shine when separated from the dross that surrounds them; united to the parts from which they are here detached, they led to no practical result, and conveyed no distinct idea. All the discourses of the ancients on the subject of the Deity want that clearness and positive tone of authority which we see, at one view, in the declaration of Moses, and which arising from the conscious certainty of the author, can alone communicate the same certainty to others. This difference I shall proceed to point out more particularly.

I. The leading excellence of the Mosaic system consists in its declaring at once to mankind their relation to an individual Creator. The existence of such a Being, far from remaining a theoretical speculation, ought to be kept in view through all the various pursuits of life; and our dependence upon him, to become the chief spring of human actions. The fear of offending him is the strongest preventive of vice; the desire of pleasing him the noblest incitement

to practical virtue. But in order to our becoming thus affected by the existence of an invisible Being, we must necessarily conceive, that, although inaccessible to our senses, he is intimately conversant with all our actions, not merely as an animating power, but as an all-seeing witness; and that, although universally diffused throughout the whole creation in the effects of his power, he himself possesses an individual and essential existence, separate from any of his creatures. Impossible as it is for us to comprehend the nature of a Being purely spiritual, it is, nevertheless, most congenial to a mind instructed in the wonders of the universe, to conceive the existence of some one intelligent Supreme, possessed of infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite goodness, as displayed in the visible world, which has its being from him, not as the emanation of his nature, but as the creation of his will.

To a large proportion of those who hold a distinguished rank among the ancient theistical philosophers, viz. the disciples of Pythagoras,

Aristotle, and Zeno, this idea of the *personality* of the Deity was in a great measure unknown. The Deity, by these philosophers, was considered not so much an intelligent Being, as an *animating power*,* diffused throughout the world; and was introduced into their speculative system to account for the motion of that passive mass of matter which was supposed to be coëval, and, indeed, co-existent, with himself. "God is not," according to a disciple of Pythagoras,† "exterior to the world, as some conjecture; but entire in himself, pervades the universal sphere; superintends all productions, is the support of all nature; eternal; the source of all power; the first simple principle of all things; the origin of celestial light; the father of all; the mind and animating principle of the universe; the first mover of all the spheres." The air of apparent sublimity con-

* Ψύχωσιν τῷ ὅλῳ κύκλῳ. Clem. Alex.

† Supposed to be a quotation from the work of some ancient Pythagorean, being found in the Doric dialect, in Justin Martyr's Address to the Gentiles (p. 18, Paris ed.) See Enfield's Hist. of Phil.

veyed by passages like this, when viewed independently of the system to which they belonged, has attached a greater credit to those systems than, on a closer examination, they will be found to deserve.

The fairest test of a theory is its application to the solution of a phænomenon. The curious treatise of Ocellus the Lucanian, one of the earliest Pythagoreans, enables us to try by this test the principles in question; and is the more interesting, as the author appears on the same ground with Moses, professing to account for the visible appearance of the world; and has been, in fact, by infidel writers, expressly opposed to the authority of the sacred historian.* Instead of acknowledging the agency of a Creator, he asserts the eternity of our system and its inhabitants in these explicit terms:† "The original birth of man, of other animals and plants, was

* He lived in the age preceding Plato. Diog. Laert. viii. 80. His authority is opposed, by Blount, to that of Moses. See Clarke on the Being and Attributes, Dem. 2.

† Opuscula Mytholog. Gale, iii. 29.

not from the earth; but the arrangement of the universe having been eternal, the things existing in it, and belonging to it, must have been eternal also; namely, the heaven, earth, and air. The parts, therefore, of the universe, having been eternal, it follows, that the things they contain were co-existent with them: the sun, the moon, the fixed stars and planets, with the heaven; animals, plants, and metals, with the earth; winds, and the vicissitudes of heat and cold, with the region of the air. Since, then, in each divsion of the universe, some race superior to the earth is constituted, as, in the heaven, that of the gods;* in earth, that of men; in the region of the air, that of dæmons; it is necessary *that the race of men should have been eternal;* and reason clearly concludes, that not the divisions of the world only, but the things contained in those divisions, must be co-eternal with the world."

* The gods here spoken of are separated from the supreme principle, or Deity, which animates the whole. Pythagoras supposed four orders of subordinate intelligent beings; gods, demi-gods, heroes, and men. Laert. viii. 23.

Those, therefore, have been misled by terms, considered without reference to the system to which they belong, who imagine, from the celebrated *Monad* of Pythagoras, that he or his followers entertained any clear conception of one only Creator, himself independent of his creation; the universe itself was their monad, and so called, because it consisted, according to the doctrine we have seen, of one indivisible whole. To this purpose it is expressly declared, in another part of the same treatise,* "that the things contained in the universe have a connexion with the universe, but the universe with no other thing, but only with itself."

The theological tenets of Zeno resemble closely those of Pythagoras, and are liable to the same objections. Although no part of ancient philosophy contains more elevated descriptions of the divine nature than the Stoical writings, we find, on a careful inspection, that the Supreme Deity of Zeno was considered as a pure ethereal fire, the active principle that pervaded and informed

* P. 10.

the passive material mass, "the substance of which was the world and the heaven."* In conformity with this description, the Stoic is represented by Cicero to affirm, "*that the universe must of necessity be intelligent,*" and that the nature which holds all things together must excel in the perfection of reason: that the "*universe, therefore, is the Deity*, all the power of which is sustained by a divine nature."† "The universe," says Manilius,‡ "is animated, is moved by reason; since one spirit dwells in every part, and, prevading universally, cherishes the world, and gives its form to the embodied animal." In these passages, which faithfully, though briefly, recapitulate the sum of the Stoical creed, instead of a real Father of mankind, who, from his heavenly throne, overlooks and protects his creatures, we discover only what may be called an infinitely extended soul: we discover not the object of adoration or prayer, but the philosophical agent, invented by reason, to explain why

* Laert. vii. 148. † Nat. Deor. ii. 11.

‡ Lib. 2. See also Plutarch de Placitis Philosoph. c. 7. l. 1.

"the sensible warm motion should animate the kneaded clod."

That the doctrine of Aristotle is exposed to a similar censure is more immediately obvious, and more generally acknowledged; since this philosopher, both in his own age, and in later times, has been exposed to the imputation of atheism. There are, however, no ancient writings,* in which a more elaborate proof of an agency distinct from inanimate matter, can be found. "The first heaven,"† Aristotle asserts, "is eternal; there is also something that gives it motion: since, then, there is a thing moved and a mover, there is some middle thing which moves that which is itself inert, which is eternal, substance, and energy." This substance, he proceeds to prove by a string of subtleties, "is

* Of other systems he expressly declares, *οὐδέν λέγει οὐδείς, οὐδὲ ἐνδέχεται εἶπειν, ἐαν μὴ, ὡς ἡμεῖς, εἴπῃ, ὡς τὸ κινοῦν ποιεῖ.*

† Meaning the universe: "Universum, mundus, cœlum, sunt sæpe *συνώνυμα* apud Platonem." Serranus.

without parts, indivisible, without passions, and unchangeable."*

But as the Deity of Zeno and Pythagoras is resolved into a vital principle, or ethereal fire, that of Aristotle is merely an external moving power: not the creator or even the director of the world, which is equally eternal with himself: an energy, in fact, which, excepting in the constant exercise of its nature, as the cause of motion, resides unconnected with our world, and happy in the contemplation of himself, in the celestial sphere. Such a deity, it need scarcely be urged, is purely *physical*, and bears a part in the author's peculiar system of natural philosophy, but is totally without that personal interference in human affairs, which would be necessary to render him the natural object of religious reverence. Indeed, this general result of ideas, such as those which have been hitherto developed re-

* Met. l. vi. cap. 6, 7, &c. Also de Cœlo, ii. 3. Θεοῦ ἐνεργέια, ἀθάνασιά ἐστιν· τοῦτο δὲ ἐστιν Ζωὴ ἀίδιος· ὥστε ἀνάγκη τῷ θείῳ ἀίδιον κίνησιν ὑπάρχειν.

specting the Supreme Being, is evident, as soon as the principle is exposed. The numerous philosophers who embraced them, frequently, without doubt, in their popular precepts admitted the popular language, and enjoined, that worship should be offered to the gods; and some expressly taught, that to the inferior deities, of whom mention was made in the extract from Ocellus, adoration was due; but unless their theological system has been here misrepresented, it will be a true inference, that such conceptions of the divine nature could lead to no results of practical piety. It was impossible that Aristotle should address his *first mover*, who had no concern in the existence of the world, eternal like himself, and whose situation in the remotest sphere, the supposed centre of motion, removed him as much as the indolent deities of Epicurus from the knowledge of human affairs. Nor could the mind of a Stoic or a Pythagorean when torn with anxiety and affliction, turn from the distractions of life to the contemplation of an Almighty Disposer of events. They had arrived at no idea of a Creator, whose relation

to his creatures might induce him to regard their distresses with commiseration.* The very mind that suffered was a portion of the supreme deity they acknowledged, and, at its dissolution from the body, was about to return to it again. These are the natural conclusions to be drawn from such theories as have been already brought under consideration; nor do any facts remain to us which invalidate, in the main, the truth of such a deduction.

II. That indistinct veil which, according to the doctrines of these numerous philosophers, overspread the greatness of the Deity, and obscured him from the homage of human worship and contemplation, seems to have been penetrated by the mind of Socrates alone. The voice of the oracle, which pronounced this singular philosopher the wisest of mankind, is sanc-

* It is justly remarked in Cicero, (de Nat. Deor. i. 11,) Pythagoras, qui censuit animum esse per naturam rerum omnem intentum et commeantem, ex quo nostri animi carperentur, non vidit distractione humanorum animorum discerpi et lacerari Deum, et cum miseri animi essent, quod plerisque contingeret, tum Dei partem esse miseram.

tioned by the writings of antiquity and the judgment of more enlightened times. But it has not been explicitly observed, that his merit is due to his avoiding the very subject, in which his rival theists failed; to his declaring *the dependence of matter upon mind, without confounding their existence:* so that his supreme deity is not a mechanical agent, but a separate being: not the mover only, but the maker of the universe. His superiority consists in the correct conceptions which he formed of the personality of the Deity; whose actual superintendence of human affairs, and intimacy with human actions, was his favourite theme in those sublime discourses, in which he appears to have fixed the mark of moral eloquence, and shown the actual height to which unassisted reason can attain.

Socrates, however, was not less admirable for the discoveries at which his reason arrived, than for his abstinence from those topics which reason cannot successfully pursue. He did not inquire, as we are assured by Xenophon, concerning the nature of the universe, or constitu-

tion of the world: this, and other metaphysical speculations, he left to the sophists of his time, and applied himself to the more useful inquiry into the principles of morals. The theological doctrine which he enforced, and contented himself with enforcing, was that of a providence, and of an immaterial agent separate from the visible world; and there can be no doubt, that if any practical sense of the unity and personality of the Supreme Being existed at all among the ancient philosophers, it is to be found in the sentiments of Socrates.*

Have we, then, in this singular ornament of ancient philosophy, a rival of Moses, who, if it had been his business to declare a cosmogony to an infant community, could have attained the same consistency and precision? We have no reason to make this favourable conclusion. He

* The agency of inferior deities, and the superiority of the δημιουργὸς, is expressly admitted in his dialogue with Euthydemus. Ὅι τε γὰρ ἄλλοι (θεοὶ), he says, ἡμῖν τὰ ἀγαθα διδόντες, οὐδεν τούτων εἰς τοὐμφανὲς ἰοντες διδόασιν, καὶ ὁ τὸν ὅλον κόσμον συντάττων τε καὶ συνέχων, ἐν ᾧ πάντα καλὰ καὶ ἀγαθα ἐστι, ὗτος τὰ μέγιστα πράττων ὁράται, τὰδε δὲ οἰκονομῶν ἀόρατος ἡμῖν ἐστιν. Mem. l. iv. c. 3.

himself avoided all system, and this was his security: he despised the inquiry, (as we are expressly assured by the most faithful recorder of his sentiments,) "whether the universe was a single substance, or made up of a multitude of parts, whether all things were generated and perishable, or eternal and indestructible;"* and thus showed what he judged attainable by mere reason, in the subjects on which his own reason was employed. But when Plato subsequently began to reduce his master's doctrines into an actual system, and attempted to explain the constitution of the universe, he fell into an error opposite to that already exposed, and instead of confounding the immaterial mind with matter, maintained the equally independent existence of each principle. Thus, concurring in the almost universal opinion of antiquity, and degrading the attributes of his deity, by supposing him unequal to the original creation of matter, he concluded it to have existed from eternity,†

* Xen. Mem. c. i. l. 11, 13, 14, 16.

† Without dwelling upon the obscurities of the Timæus, where a third eternal principle is added to the two held by

independently of the divine power, which was only employed to bring it into order and form.

Anaxagoras, and where it is laid down, that the operation of the Demiurge, acting upon eternal matter through the medium of self-existent ideas, concurred in the formation of the world; it is sufficient to state Plato's doctrine in the general terms of Diogenes Laertius, (iii. 69,) who, in his account of this philosopher, declares him to have taught "that there were two principles of the universe, matter and Deity; which last he also calls the mind, or cause; and that matter was without form and infinite. God, therefore, as Plato proceeds, wishing all things good, and, as far as his power extends, nothing evil, having received visible matter in a disordered state, brought it from disorder into order, judging this to be altogether preferable." And in this way was his doctrine understood by Cicero. See also Plut. de Gen. Anim. iii. 78. The *absurdity* of this system, alluded to in the text, appears from the following dilemma: Matter, supposed to exist independently, and of itself, must either have existed in the *best possible state*, or in a *state which might be improved*. If we affirm the latter, why was not that originally perfect which, being independent and self-existent, could have no possible cause of imperfection? If we affirm the former, why does another independent being interpose his power, to alter that which is already excellent? The just notion of creation is expressed by Moses alone, as Eusebius observes, Τῶν Ἑβραικῶν δογμάτων ἴδιον ἦν, τὸ ἕνα τῶν ἁπάντων ποιητὴν νομίζεσθαι τόν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸν, αὐτῆς τε τῆς ὑποκείμενης τοῖς σώμασιν οὐσίας, ἣν ὕλην προσαγορένουσιν Ελληνες. Præp. Evang. l. vii. c. 18. This subject has been exhausted by

The absurdities to which this system leads can only be avoided by the doctrine of Moses; asserting, that the same Being which organized the universe, created the matter out of which it was organized. This is the distinguishing feature of his narration, in which he retains a consistency peculiar to himself, and raises his account of the existence of the world, not only above that of the philosophers who supposed it eternal in its present state and form, but beyond those also who, with respect to the personality and agency of the Deity, approached nearest to his own conception.

This concise, though, I hope, faithful inquiry into the principles of the ancient philosophers, gives us no warrant for supposing that the doctrine of Moses was the inference of his unassisted reason. It is easy to affirm generally, that some of the ancients were monotheists; that it is probable the doctrine of the unity

Mosheim, De Creatione Mundi ex Nihilo; Barrow, 12th Serm. on the Creed; and lately in the seventh of Dr. Ireland's able Lectures on Paganism and Christianity compared.

was taught in the mysteries; to conclude that, whatever might be publicly inculcated, the esoteric precepts were purer; and to quote single passages of obscure meaning, or even of acknowledged sublimity, in proof of a deviation from the popular creed. But where is the philosopher who could boldly teach, Believe in the existence of one God, and worship no other? or whose was the system which admitted the creation of matter, and could lead its followers to a sentiment like this? "Thou, O "God, hast laid of old the foundation of the "earth, and the heavens are the work of thy "hands: they shall perish, but thou shalt en- "dure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a "garment: as a vesture shalt thou change them, "and they shall be changed: but thou art the "same, and thy years shall have no end."

* Ps. cii. 25. See also Jeremiah, c. x. 11, 12. And it is worth while to observe, from a passage in one of the books of Maccabees, that, after inspiration had ceased, the Jewish writers retained the original meaning of creation: "I beseech thee, my son, look upon the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, and consider that God made *them of things which were not*: and so was mankind made likewise." 2 Macc. vii. 28. Ireland, p. 312.

Nothing, I repeat, in the tenets or doctrines of the ancients, can justify our believing, that Moses, unassisted by revelation, from some source or other derived to him, could have conceived so distinctly, or declared so expressly, or have imprinted so indelibly upon his people, that account of the creation which is contained in the Pentateuch, and was implicitly received by the Hebrews.

Should it be still urged, that allowing the founders of the Greek philosophy not to have made the proper conclusion from the arguments which prove the existence and unity of a Creator, yet there are arguments which demonstrate it, which might have occurred to Moses, though they did not occur in the same force to them: it may be farther shown, in reply, that this is no less untrue in fact, than improbable in appearance. There are no arguments which can ascertain the existence of a Creator, which may not be referred either to the necessity of a First Cause, which is the method Clarke has followed; or to the appearances of design in the construc-

tion of the world, irresistibly indicating a contriver; which is the ground which Paley, after a multitude of predecessors, has so ably taken and maintained.

I. Neither of these trains of reasoning was unperceived by the Grecian masters of philosophy. The very process pursued by Socrates is detailed at large. To his solid understanding, says Xenophon, it appeared contradictory and absurd to honour the painter and the statuary, because their senseless and inert imitations resemble the form of man, and not to honour the unseen maker of man himself, endued with sense and motion. It seemed contradictory to admit design in the works of human art, which are seen to correspond with their intended use, and at the same time to suppose that the sensitive faculties of man proceed from chance; to allow to the mind of man the power of governing the body, and to deny to the mind of the universe the power of ruling the world.*

* Mem. c. iv. l. 1.

By these and similar steps of analogy, to the force of which even the reasoners of these later times have made little addition, except that arising from cumulative evidence, Socrates persuaded his hearers of the intelligence, the constant presence, and the superintendence of the gods; and seems to have stood alone among the ancients, as was before observed, in applying his speculative belief to the practical purpose of regulating the lives and conduct of his disciples.* Yet did he arrive at a distinct conclusion, or inculcate a simple belief of the unity, like Moses? To say nothing invidiously upon the obscurity which hung over his own mind, and which many of his habits betray; ("for he was constant in sacrificing both in private and at the public altars, and often applied to divination;"†) Xenophon, even whilst he is relating the successful arguments of Socrates, speaks commonly of a plurality of gods: and we find it openly asserted by Plato, in a strain the most opposite to that of Moses, that

* Mem. c. iv. s. 19.

† Xen. i. 1, 2. Cicero de Nat. Deor. i. 12.

" to discover the Artificer and Father of the universe, is indeed difficult, and that, when found, it is impossible to reveal him through the medium of discourse to mankind at large."* Accordingly, in an oration supposed to be held in public, we find Plato reasoning to the people with every appearance of seriousness, on the certainty of their having sprung from the soil of their own country.†

II. The other course of argument, viz. the necessary existence of an eternal Being, as the prime mover of the material part of the creation, was first insisted on, as far as I am aware, by Aristotle. The following passage, however, is sufficient to prove that it was well understood by that philosopher: " I affirm," he says, " that the Deity is an animate Being, immortal, excellent; since life and an uninterrupted eternity belong to God; for this is God. But they are in error, who think with the Pythagorians and Speusippus, that what is most

* Timæus, Taylor's translation, vol. ii. p. 475.

† Dial. Menen.

excellent and perfect is not the original; reasoning in this way, that the causes of plants and animals exist first in their seeds, from whence afterwards their perfection proceeds. For the seed of which they speak, comes itself from others that were before perfect; and the real original is not the seed, but the perfect plant or animal. It is plain, therefore, that there is some Being eternal and unchangeable, and separate from the objects of our senses."*

Here we seem to have discovered the truth for which we are searching; and might expect that the author of the sentences above cited, had established a system of pure theism. Yet in the same treatise which contains this sublime argument, we find, to the humiliation of reason, that this first moving Deity was incorporated by Aristotle *with the world, which is supposed equally eternal and incorruptible with himself.* So that it has even been a question, whether he who first saw the metaphysical necessity of

* Metaph. vii. 14.

a First Cause, ought not to be reckoned among the atheistical philosophers.

Had there not been preserved to us passages of this nature, enabling us to judge of the effect produced by analogical and demonstrative argument, upon the mind which has no other instruction; it might not have been safe to deny that Moses could have been led by the mere force of such reasoning to assert the existence of one God, the Creator of heaven and earth. But knowing, as we thus do, the insufficient result both of analogical proof and systematic demonstration, we surely are bound to believe that some more sensible evidence lay before the writer, who, without stopping to argue, seizes the conclusion at which argument painfully arrives, with an effect which mere argument has never attained. For, even if we were to affirm that a train of reasoning, like those we have considered, was present to the mind of Moses, of which he published only the conclusion; that he declared the theorem, but withheld the steps of demonstration which led to

it: what justice could there be in imagining that its effect would have proved more general than that of Socrates, or produced a system less embarrassed and inconclusive than we have found in Plato or Aristotle? Can it be contended, that the Jews, in the time of Moses, were in such a state of improvement, as to see intuitively the process of argument which ended in the inference proposed to them? It may rather be affirmed, that no man could have proposed such an inference so nakedly and gratuitously, unless it were supported in the minds of his hearers, by familiar and indisputable testimony. Had Newton simply asserted that the planets perform a regular course round their centre, the sun, and are retained in their appointed paths by a general law of attraction, keeping back in the mean time the gradual demonstration which guided his belief; in spite of the rational probability of his opinion, he would have had no more prospect of establishing a permanent system than Ptolemy or Copernicus. Yet Moses, while he combats no doubts, and provides against no possibility of

scepticism, perpetuates among his people a pure and rational theology. How did he effect this, unless, because invested with plenary power, he declared at once the truth which he was charged to deliver to posterity, with a voice of authority which the dogmas of philosophy cannot assume, and imposture is unable to imitate?*

I shall conclude this discussion with two collateral arguments, which seem to fix incontrovertibly the point I have endeavoured to establish. For, first, if there be a wide difference between the doctrines taught by the philosophers and those derived from the Hebrew into the Christian scriptures, respecting the nature of God and the original of the universe, we may expect to find this difference remarked by those who, having been long conversant with the one, became at last acquainted with the other.

* So Justin truly characterizes the old Hebrew writers: *οὐ μετὰ ἀποδείξεως πεποίηνται τότε τοὺς λόγους, ἅτε ἀνωτέρω πάσης ἀποδείξεως ὄντες ἀξιόπιστοι μάρτυρες τῆς ἀληθείας.*— Cum Tryphone Dial. xxv. ed. Jubb.

To this purpose we have the most explicit declarations from the early converts to Christianity.

Justin Martyr* details his progress through the various philosophical sects, in search after a knowledge of the Supreme Being, and relates the inconsistencies which successively disgusted him in them all: till his venerable instructor pointed out to him the Hebrew writers, who being much earlier in age, and speaking by divine intimation, had alone seen the truth, and declared it to mankind.† Eusebius, after giving a diffuse account of the numerous discordant and absurd opinions which prevailed in different countries and sects concerning the divine nature, breaks out into a just description

* Lucian, with less gravity, though equally in earnest, points out the contradictions of the philosophers, and the impossibility of discovering the truth through their means. Νεκυομαντία, ch. iv. Cicero's Treatise de Natura Deorum, was even reckoned favourable to Christianity, from the uncertainty and vanity of the existing system which it exposed. See Arnob. l. xxiii. p. 103.

† Dial. p. 24.

of the contrast which the doctrine he had espoused opened to his view. "I have reason," he declares, "to profess myself relieved from a long and inveterate error, and feel as if recovered from a most severe and dangerous disease."* Augustin too, in his remarkable confessions, describes the wavering uncertainty which hung over his mind till he at last became thoroughly imbued with a knowledge of God from the Scriptures.†

And yet the sincere searchers after truth in those later times had great advantages over the immediate disciples of Pythagoras, Plato, or Zeno, from the improvements introduced into their system, and the clearness communicated to their views, from other sources than those of unassisted philosophy. This leads me to my second observation, in which I would remark

* Præp. Ev. ii. 6.

† In the dialogue Philopatris, attributed, as is thought erroneously, to Lucian, the account of the creation given by Moses is spoken of as new, and with particular mention of the Creatio ex Nihilo, and the observation of human actions. Luc. Hist. v. iii. 599 and 603.

how strongly the superiority of the Mosaic doctrine is confirmed, from the subsequent history of those philosophical opinions which I have employed this Section in discussing.

For, if it be true that the cosmogony of Moses is more rational, and his ideas of the Deity are more consistent and sublime than those of the philosophers with which they have been compared, it must be naturally expected that the language and sentiments of philosophy would be somewhat altered and improved, when the Jewish system became gradually known, first through the Greek translation, and the increasing connexion of the Jews with other countries; and afterwards more extensively, through the medium of the Christians. It is remarkable, that such an alteration is undoubtedly dicernible; and is discernible particularly in those two instances, in which the fathers of the Stoical and Platonic system were open to confutation. The later Stoics,* through whose writings we are most accustomed to judge of

* See Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, vol. ii. p. 7, s. 2.

their whole sect, adopt the Socratic language concerning the Deity, even with improved distinctness and sublimity. "Honour," says Antoninus,* "that which is most excellent in the universe; this is that Being that uses all things, and administers all things." Here he describes the personality of God; and accordingly, in common with Epictetus, attributes not only the general course of his fortunes, but even the minutest circumstances of his life, to a superintending Providence.†

The later Platonists too, as Maximus Tyrius, Jamblichus, Proclus, and Hierocles, perceived the inconsistency of allowing two independent principles: and, availing themselves of the obscurity of their master's language, denied that this doctrine, notwithstanding the consent of antiquity, was inculcated or believed by Plato:‡ till by degrees the advocates of Plato,

* Medit. v. 21. Compare v. 26.

† Medit. i. 17.

‡ That Plato intended to inculcate this doctrine, is virtually proved by his introducing Timæus the Locrian, as the speaker in his dialogue upon the origin and nature of the

who also called themselves Christians, endeavoured to introduce a consistent system of universal philosophy, in which the errors of the learned and the folly of the vulgar were professedly corrected by the light of the Scrip-

universe ; when Timæus had laid down his opinion so clearly and openly, *πρίν οὔρανον γένεσθαι, λόγῳ ἦστην ἰδέα καὶ ὕλα.* The fact is, that almost any thing, except a clear and consistent system, may be educed from the various and voluminous works of Plato and Aristotle. An opinion which they and the other ancient philosophers are very far from deserving, might be formed by a person who took his idea of their doctrine from summaries or abstracts. In these, one general view is given of sentiments which were originally scattered not only through various pages, but even through many different treatises: collected, they appear perspicuous, and even sublime ; but in their original state are usually inconsistent and unintelligible. For instance ; Dr. Gillies, in his Analysis of Aristotle's Works, arranges what he terms " a system of theology, not less satisfactory than sublime ;" p. 138. But when we trace this system to its source, we find it collected in part from the fourteen books of Metaphysics, in part from the Physical Auscultations, in part from the Treatise on the Heaven : scarcely two sentences taken from the same chapter, and often one sentence composed from chapters originally detached. Not to mention, that the paraphrastic form adopted in abstracts of this kind gives a clearness to what in its literal interpretation scarcely conveys any intelligible idea.

tures. The diffusion of philosophical truth is slow and gradual; but where the intercourse of conflicting opinions is free, those arguments which have their foundation in reason, will ultimately take the lead. It is not surprising, therefore, that the majority of theistical philosophers should coincide at last in opinions consonant to those of Moses, respecting the attributes of the Deity, and the formation of the world:* but it must be remembered that these authorities can no more convey to us a just idea of the confusion before existing, than the order of the universe represents the previous chaos.

Hume has justly observed, that "were men led into the apprehension of invisible, intelligent power, by a contemplation of the works of nature, they could never possibly entertain any conception but of one single Being, who bestowed existence and order on this vast machine, and adjusted all its parts according to

* In the same way the absurdities of the popular faith became more generally avowed, and more boldly exposed. This is very observable in the open sarcasm of Juvenal, Seneca, and Lucian: language like theirs was not ventured before the Christian æra. See in particular Lucian's Timon.

one regular plan or connected system."* To this unbiassed testimony may be added that of Lord Bolingbroke; who has declared, that "the idea of an all-wise and all-powerful Being, the first cause of all things, is proportionable to human reason; and that the whole universe bears witness to his existence." This rational doctrine, as it is most justly characterized, was the doctrine of Moses, and was explicitly taught by him alone of all the ancient philosophers who attempted to give any account of the existence of the world. It is a fact which can be no otherwise explained, than by admitting the truth of the history itself, that Moses, in a very early age, and in an unphilosophical country, taught and established a system which philosophers gradually approached, as the cultivation of the human mind advanced: and which appeared most agreeable to reason, when reason was most improved.

* Hist. of Nat. Religion.

SECTION IX.

Moses neither received his Doctrine of the Creation from the Egyptians, nor from the popular Belief of the Israelites.

If it is thus morally improbable, that Moses should have been the inventor of the sublime theology he established among the Hebrews, we come now to consider the second explanation that may be proposed. The Hebrews, it is said, during some centuries preceding the age of Moses, had been a settled people in a civilized nation; and Moses being "learned in all "the wisdom of the Egyptians," it is pretended that he imbibed from that fountain the opinions he promulgated concerning the creation of the world.*

* In a sentence of Simplicius's Commentary on Aristotle, (l. 8, p. 268,) this is affirmed, but merely at random. Speak-

I. What the Egyptian philosophy or religious worship might be in the days of Moses, we have no certain means of collecting except from the Scriptures. These, it must be confessed, do not favour the idea under consideration. They represent the God of the Hebrews, as altogether unknown to the Egyptians. When Moses prefers his request to Pharaoh in behalf of the people of Israel, Pharaoh answers, "Who "is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let "Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will "I let Israel go." Many of the peculiar rites and ceremonies which distinguished the Hebrew worship, were pointed against the idolatry of the Egyptians, into which the Jews were wont to relapse when they swerved from their allegiance to the God of their fathers: and it was on this account a familiar custom with their writers, when condemning idolatrous practices, to speak of the abominations of the Egyptians.

ing of the Mosaic account, he says, ἐννοείτω (Grammaticus, against whom he is arguing) ὅτι μυθικὴ τίς ἐστιν ἡ παράδοσις, καὶ ἀπὸ μύθων Αιγυπτίων εἰλκυσμένη. See Huet. Dem. Evang. Prop. 4. c. 4.

Josephus * expressly attributes the hatred of that nation against the Jews to their religious differences; there being, he says, as decided an opposition between the respective habits of worship, as between the nature of God and that of irrational animals. And Tacitus,† after remarking some customs which the Jews had derived from Egypt, observes, that there was a decided contrast in their theology.

It certainly appears at first sight rather improbable, that the only people among the ancients who were not polytheists, should have borrowed their faith from a nation which was ridiculed, even among polytheists, for the grossness of its idolatry.‡ Thus much at least must

* Contra Ap. i. 25.

† Hist. l. v. c. 5.

‡ Ausa Jovi nostro latrantem opponere Anubin.

Prop. 3. 11. 41.

——Accepimus Isin,
Semideosque canes.—Lucan. 8. 831.
Quis nescit, Volusi Bithynice, qualia demens
Ægyptus portenta colat!—Juv. Sat. 15.

Herod. 2. 42. Minuc. Fel. 284.

be acknowledged: that if there were, at the period of which we are now speaking, any sublime notions of the Deity to be learnt in Egypt, no people ever more fatally degenerated from the wisdom of their ancestors than this had done before the date of pagan history. Not content with the worship of the heavenly bodies, or with deifying heroes and ancestors, and the attributes of supreme power, the Egyptians shocked the common sense even of idolaters, by the promiscuous adoration which they paid to the irrational, and even to the inanimate parts of the creation; an infatuated superstition in which they were far behind any people having the pretence of civilization. It is surely too incredible to require serious refutation, that a nation which carried its idolatrous practices to such an extreme length, as to ransack for deities their fields, their gardens, and their deserts, should have taught the Israelites to worship one God, the Creator and Father of all.

It being allowed, however, that the outward doctrine of the Egyptians was polytheism, ido-

latry, and the mysteries of magic, there was also, we are informed, an esoteric doctrine of natural religion; and Moses, through the influence of his royal protectress, might be let into a knowledge of both. It certainly appears that there was a mysterious doctrine professed by the priests, and concealed from the people: and indeed it is in itself incredible, that the educated part of the nation should not have seen the popular worship in its real absurdity. From what we know, however, of the esoteric doctrine of the philosophers, of which Plutarch gives an account which seems to be derived from Greek, rather than Egyptian sources, we shall find nothing to justify our accounting in this way for the consistency of the Mosaic history. Our knowledge upon this subject is confessedly imperfect, as coming to us at second hand, through Grecian interpreters; which has increased the perplexity in which all the ancient philosophy is more or less involved, in consequence of its inconsistency. It appears, however, that the Egyptians concurred with the other ancient philosophers in believing the

eternity of matter,* as a first principle from which the four elements were separated, and animals formed. Whether they added to this material principle an active intelligent principle, is doubtful, being asserted by Plutarch, and denied by Porphyry and others. If they did, their doctrine will resemble the Platonic; will be equally different from that of Moses, and be liable to the objections which embarrass Plato. If they did not, the account which Diodorus † gives of the Egyptian cosmogony must have been derived from their philosophers: it being the common assertion of the people, that the human race first sprung up in Egypt, on account of the excellent temperature of that region, and the fertilizing influence of the Nile. That Moses should have derived a just idea of the creation from this confusion and obscurity, is not less improbable than that he should have invented it.

* Diog. Laert. Procem. 10, says, φάσκειν (Αιγυπτίους) ἀρχὴν μὲν εἶναι τὴν ὕλην, ἔιτα τὰ τέσσαρα στοιχεῖα ἐξ αὐτῆς διακριθῆναι, καὶ ζῶά τινα ἀποτελεσθῆναι.

† L. 6. See also Euseb. Præp. Ev. ii. 1.

Besides this, however, it is agreed on all sides that this imperfect philosophy was rendered still more imperfect by the belief which was united to it, of inferior deities residing in the heavenly bodies. The planets were worshipped under the title of Cabiri, the moon by the name of Isis or Bubastes, the sun by that of Ammon, Horus, and Osiris.*

The most favourable opinions, therefore, that we are warranted in forming as to the Egyptians will amount to this, and no more: that, as the people were infinitely deeper plunged in idolatry, so the priests or philosophers † were in no respect purer from error than the rest of the ancient world. Indeed it might reasonably excite our wonder to find the Egyptian learning in such high estimation, did we not know from experience, how often antiquity passes for excel-

* Diog. Laert. ubi supra. Jablonski Panth. Egypt.

† Diogenes Laertius speaks of the whole nation promiscuously as idolatrous. Procem. l. 10. Juneval seems to have written his 15th Satire, to show that the Egyptians, who were usually held in such high veneration, were really among the most barbarous of nations.

lence, and mystery for wisdom. The nation of which we are speaking, seems to have earliest attained that degree of civilization,* which first produces a regular scheme of polity, and is afterwards farther improved by its effects: so that the account left us by the ancient historians of the Egyptian laws and customs is in many respects calculated to excite our applause. When, therefore, some of the early Greeks † left their rude and uncivilized countrymen, to whom the barrenness of their soil scarcely afforded a subsistence, and found in Egypt a land abounding in fertility, and a regular government and laws, the contrast naturally filled them with admiration; and the useful inventions which they carried back as trophies of their travels, perpetuated the memory and fame of the country from which they were originally derived, even to a period when the Egyptians were no more to be

* Diod. Sic. p. 64, Rhod.

† Homer, Lycurgus, Solon, Thales, Melampus, Pythagoras, &c. Much is to be learnt on this subject from Woodward's posthumous Treatise on the Learning of the Egyptians, Archæolog. vol. iv.

compared with the Greeks themselves, than their Anubis with the Grecian Jupiter. The rude principles of geometry, astronomy, and the mathematics, existed among them, but were afterwards improved by the ingenuity of the Greeks; for we find it was Eudoxus who first explained the motions of the heavenly bodies, by the application of mathematical science, and that Thales was the first whose astronomical knowledge enabled him to predict an eclipse.*

It may be farther remarked, that if there were any good reason to believe that what are called the doctrines of natural religion could

* Brucker, Hist. ant. Phil. "If Pythagoras sacrificed a hecatomb upon finding out the 47th proposition of Euclid, and Thales an ox on having discovered how to inscribe a rectangled triangle in a circle, *after having studied mathematics in Egypt,* the parent of geometry; what opinion does it give us of the knowledge of their masters in that science! Thales having shown them how to measure the heights of their pyramids by their shadow, is a proof of their little progress in trigonometry." Wood on the Genius and Writings of Homer. This writer will not allow that Egypt could have furnished even Homer's mythology.

have been learnt by Moses in Egypt, which is not the case; there are other decided objections against attributing his theology to any such origin. Had he borrowed his doctrine from those priests, would he not have imitated the priests in withholding the purer belief from the vulgar? What right have we to conclude that he who had seen the pretended mysteries concealed by hieroglyphics, and reserved with the most scrupulous care from the general eye, would suddenly and at once seize on the propriety of declaring them to the people at large? Why should we imagine, that he who had witnessed only the general practice of idolatry, and left this the universal worship of his supposed instructress Egypt, would immediately proscribe it under pain of death in his own nation? Had Moses received his ideas from the education given him by the priests, it is far more probable, that he would have imbibed and acted upon the same notions, as to the expediency of keeping the people in utter ignorance, than that he should have struck out a plan diametrically opposite to the whole practice,

not of his instructors only, but of all the ancient philosophers, who agreed in little else than in the necessity of perpetuating the vulgar superstitions.

In addition to these considerations, if Moses derived his theology from Egypt, and thought himself at liberty to alter it according to his own views of utility, it is impossible to explain his having omitted to sanction his law by inculcating the belief of the soul's immortality.* Though the precise tenets of the Egyptians upon this subject have not been transmitted to us, it seems very evident that they taught the existence of the soul after the dissolution of the body, though veiling it, probably, under the fable of a metempsychosis.† Now, this doctrine is equally useful to the philosophic theist, and to the practical statesman; useful to the theist, as removing the only plausible

* Warburton, Div. Leg. iv. s. 6.

† I qualify the assertion, though commonly believed, because some have questioned Herodotus's account, who is express on the subject. Euterpe, s. 123. Vide Cudworth, i. 313.

objection against the moral government of God in the world; and to the statesman, as holding out a stronger terror to the wicked, than any punishment he is able to threaten; and affording an universal incitement to virtue, which it is totally out of his power to reward. This advantage was well understood by the ancients, as was formerly observed; and Zaleucus and Plato both inculcated the belief, the one in his real, the other in his imaginary republic. But whatever may have been the opinion of the Hebrews upon this point, derived from the history of their ancestors, it is impossible to deny that the sanctions of the Mosaic law are altogether temporal. This circumstance has been even alleged as a charge to discredit his legislation.* It is indeed one of the many

* Since Bolingbroke, who first touched this string, the omission of the doctrine of a future state from the Jewish law has been "*seen with surprise*" by every sceptical essayist. I am well aware that the knowledge of a resurrection and future state was familiar to the patriarchs; which is proved by the translation of Enoch, the faith of Abraham, the vision of Jacob, &c. beyond fair controversy. This has been often shown, but no where more clearly than by Sir H. Moncrieff

facts which can only be explained by acknowledging that he really acted under a divine commission, promulgating a temporary law for a peculiar purpose to a single nation. But if it is believed, that Moses had sufficient skill to frame the admirable system which he delivered to his people, out of the mixture of idolatry and mystery with which Egypt abounded, it is incredible that he should not have united with it, as the firmest support of his precepts and laws, their opinions, alike useful and popular, of the immortality of the soul.

II. It only remains to suppose that Moses received that doctrine which the Egyptians were unable to teach him, and which he cannot possibly be thought to have derived from the powers of his own mind, from the religious sentiments and traditions which prevailed among

Wellwood, in his recent volume on the evidence of the Jewish and Christian revelation, Discourse 2d; in which that able writer adduces the various passages of the Old Testament which bear upon this point, and shows the corroboration they receive from allusions in the New.

the Hebrew people.* If this account is held to be true, the difficulty which it creates is no less formidable than that which it is intended to explain.

The people of Israel, for some centuries preceding the time of Moses, had been pastoral. Their chiefs, or patriarchs, were shepherds; their riches consisted in flocks and herds. Jacob is described as "increasing exceedingly, "and having much cattle, and men-servants and "maid-servants, and camels and asses." His presents to his brother Esau consisted of "two "hundred she-goats, twenty he-goats, two hun- "dred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milch "camels, with their colts, forty kine and ten "bulls, twenty she-asses, and ten foals."† His sons are represented as feeding their cattle from place to place. At the invitation of Joseph,

* I do not, of course, intend to deny that the belief of a Creator existed among the Israelites in Egypt, but to show the improbability of such a belief prevailing among them, except by original revelation.

† Gen. xxxii. 13.

his family seem to have changed their place of abode, with all the ease that characterizes the removal of a shepherd's riches. "They "took their cattle, and their goods which they "had gotten in the land of Canaan and came "into Egypt, Jacob and all his seed with "him."*

The people whose manners most closely resemble this description at the present day, are the Bedouin Arabs and the Tartarian hordes. Accordingly, this correspondence has struck the most intelligent travellers into those countries. "A Bedouin Shaik," says Volney, "who has the command of five hundred horse, does not disdain to saddle and bridle his own, nor to give him barley and chopped straw. In his tent, his wife makes the coffee, kneads the dough, and superintends the dressing of the victuals. His daughters and kinswomen wash the linen, and go with pitchers on their heads, and veils over their faces, to draw water from the fountain. These manners agree precisely with the

* Gen. xlvi. 6.

descriptions in Homer, and the history of Abraham in Genesis."*

In the same way, the inhabitants of the immense plains of Tartary have never attained that degree of civilization which incorporates a community in towns or cities, and is, in its turn, promoted by a settled residence. This uniformity of life has naturally produced a uniformity of manners.† "All their wealth is their flocks; like those who lived in the early ages of the world, they have camels, horses, cows, and sheep. Of their religion (proceeds the same author) I can say little: they are downright heathens."‡ This, it seems, excited in him no surprise. But if the same sensible observer had found a nation so unimproved and rude, possessing a clear and rational account of the creation of the world, and its Creator,

* Travels in Syria, i. 405.

† Gibbon (vol. iv. p. 341) considers "the uniform stability of their manners as the natural consequence of the imperfection of their faculties."

‡ Bell's Travels, vol. i.

would he have recorded the fact with the same indifference, and concluded that such a doctrine had been inculcated among them by some philosopher or lawgiver of their own? Should we not rather have expected him to inquire from what communications of other more civilized countries, a belief so pure and rational had been introduced? Why, but because reason and experience alike deny the probability, that a nation in so uncivilized a state could have devised the idea of an immaterial Creator. For, after the errors have been exposed by which the greatest philosophers were bewildered, when adventuring upon a theme so lofty, it will not be disputed that the notion of one omnipotent Being, who formed all things out of nothing by his own individual will; who cherishes them by his goodness and upholds them by his power; is the most grand and sublime which the imagination of man can attain. He cannot have raised his opinions of the powers of the human mind upon experience, who supposes that the discovery of such a Being, even if attainable at all by reason, can be any thing but the final result

of long abstraction, the profound acquisition of an improved and philosophic mind.

Now, the pastoral life, even that peaceable state of it which the Israelites seem to have enjoyed, though it is considerably raised above that lowest condition of human society which subsists on the produce of the chase, is nevertheless entirely unsuited to the arts which adorn civilized communities, and to the sciences which it is the business of philosophy to cultivate and improve. It is in towns, which are almost unknown to shepherds; not under the tent, or in the plain, that the collision of various intellects has been universally observed to strike out the most useful discoveries. Their unsettled mode of life admits of no sedentary employment; nor of that frequent recurrence of the mind to the same object, which leads to the results of philosophic meditation. Every part of the population, from the highest to the lowest, contributes its share towards the general activity; so that no opportunities are afforded to learned leisure, no support is given to the

unproductive labourer in philosophy or literature. If genius is fostered at all in such a community, it is not the genius of the philosopher, but of the poet. In uncivilized states, the demand is not so much for instruction as for amusement; and it naturally follows, that the tone of the writers is taken from the temper of the community. Those will be held in the highest esteem, who can celebrate the warlike exploits of their countrymen in animated and heroic song; or paint a strong delineation of their manners in satire, or on the stage.*

If we apply these general remarks to what we actually know of those countries which have only made the first advances towards civilization, they will not be contradicted, but strengthened by farther inquiry. We shall find, that to the Arabians, before the age of Mahomet,

* Est in Originibus (Catonis) solitos esse in epulis canere convivas ad tibicinem de clarorum hominum virtutibus. Cic. Tusc. Qu. l. 1. Homer, and the Bards, are familiar instances. This is illustrated at large by Lowth on the Hebrew Poetry, Lect. iv.

though "their penetration was sharp, their fancy luxuriant, their wit strong and sententious, the arts of grammar, of metre, and of rhetoric, were unknown."* Their morality was delivered in unconnected sentences; their philosophy was illustrated by fable. "But the genius and merit of a rising poet was celebrated by the applause of his own and the kindred tribes." In that country too, with whose progress in refinement we have the most intimate acquaintance, we know that Homer flourished four centuries before the first historian whose works have been preserved, and not much less remotely even from the first prose writers whose names have been recorded.† The philosophy of those who have been distinguished as the seven wise men, and who lived in the intermediate period, was never collected, like that of their successors, into a system of physics or

* Gibbon, ix. 241.

† The first who published a prose oration was Pherecydes, a contemporary of Cyrus. See Lowth, Lect. iv. Hecatæus and Cadmus, the Milesian historians, belonged to nearly the same period.

morals, but consisted, for the most part, of sage or quaint observations on human life, which perhaps owe their preservation as much to the concise terseness of the Greek language, as to their intrinsic merit or originality. The style of Herodotus,* as well as that of the Old Testament, gives in many instances a curious example of that intermediate step in the history of language, before their respective styles have been separately assigned to poetry and prose. And although the manners of the two nations among whom these works were produced, must have been in some respects essentially different, we shall certainly err in favour of the Israelites, if we compare their degree of civilization in the time of Moses, with that of the Greeks in the age of Herodotus.

Yet it was in a state of society like this, and to a people which, before their residence in Egypt, had been certainly pastoral, that Moses

* A literal translation of some of the stories in Herodotus, of that of Adrastus, for example, would greatly resemble many of the narratives in Genesis.

declared as a fact, what at a much later period the wisest philosophers did not venture to affirm; what Aristotle, as we have seen, endeavoured to demonstrate, and Xenophon and Cicero to render probable by analogy. In the natural progress of science, the last result of long induction, or a series of demonstrations, is a simple proposition.* That proposition, having borne the test of repeated trials and examinations, is added, as it were, to the capital stock of general knowledge: but, in arriving at this state, the simplest truths, such as the aberration of light, or the electricity of the clouds, have cost their first discoverers the half of a philosophic life. To this rule there is no exception. In moral and in natural philosophy, the proofs must equally precede the deduction. But on what authority does Moses, overstepping the necessity of proof, declare, in simple and

* "De l'aveu de presque tous les philosophes, les plus sublimes verités, une fois simplifiées et reduites à leurs moindres termes, se convertissent en faits, et dès-lors ne presentent plus à l'esprit que cette proposition: le blanc est blanc, le noir est noir." Helvetius sur l'Homme, chap. xxiii.

positive terms, the existence of one God, as the Creator of heaven and earth? On the same authority as that on which an astronomer of the present day lays down as the foundation of his system, the sublimest discoveries of Newton, without insisting on the demonstrations of truths which the world has generally acknowledged. So the truth which Moses declared, it was unnecessary, it would have been impertinent to prove, when it was already recognised by the whole Hebrew nation; among whom the memory of the creation had been preserved by indubitable records, handed down to them with the history of their ancestors, and the power of the Creator had been proved to the evidence of their senses by recent interpositions.

I entirely agree with Hume,* that "nothing could disturb the natural progress of thought

* Nat. Hist. of Rel. p. 1. There is no exception to this remark in the history of Greece or Italy, India or America. Mr. Hume had thought much of mankind as a philosopher, Dr. Robertson as an historian; and in this they perfectly agree. "When the intellectual faculties are just beginning to

which rises gradually from inferior to superior, and, by abstracting from what is imperfect,

unfold, and their feeble exertions are directed towards a few objects of primary necessity and use, it is preposterous to expect that men should be capable of tracing any relation between effects and their causes; or to suppose that they should rise from the contemplation of the former to the discovery of the latter, and from just conceptions of one Supreme Being, as the Creator and Governor of the universe." Robertson's India, 303. It is curious to observe how Hume contrives to escape from the argument in favour of the authenticity of the Hebrew Scriptures, which arises as regularly from his course of reasoning as if he had written his Natural History of Religion to prove it. "It is matter of fact incontestible, that about 1700 years ago, all mankind were polytheists. The doubtful and sceptical principles of a few philosophers, or the theism, and that too not entirely pure, of *one or two nations*, form no objection worth regarding." That mind must have been strangely constituted, upon which neither the partial exception (the force of which he has insidiously weakened by an interpolation) in the most ancient times, nor the universal change introduced 1700 years ago, could make any impression.

The remark itself is much in the spirit of Julian, who carelessly asks, *ποῖον ἔθνος ἐστὶ, πρὸς τῶν Θεῶν, ἔξω τοῦ, Οὐ προσκυνήσεις Θεοῖς ἑτέρους, καὶ τοῦ, Μνήσθητι τῶν σαββάτων, ὁ μὴ τὰς ἄλλας οἴεται χρῆναι φυλάττειν ἐντολὰς*; These very laws, which *are peculiar* to the Jews, are the object of the argument which the Emperor attempts to escape from.

slowly forms an idea of perfection: nothing could disturb this natural progress of thought, but some obvious and invincible argument which might immediately lead the mind into the pure principle of theism, and make it overleap at one bound the vast interval which is interposed between the human and the divine nature." That argument was found by the Israelites in their account of the creation, faithfully transmitted by their own ancestors from age to age; was found in the repeated interference of divine power, manifested to their nation; and had been lately confirmed beyond the possibility of doubt, by their miraculous deliverance from Egyptian slavery. On no other principle than the general acknowledgment of this proposition, can we account for the authoritative positiveness with which Moses published it to his people: and on no other principle than its truth, can we explain the superiority of his simple statement over the elaborate arguments of philosophers, to whom the evidence on which he rested, was of course unknown.

Reasoning, which concerns religious truths, from the opposite interests which some find in receiving, and others in rejecting them, is sometimes blindly embraced, and frequently as blindly refused. Let us attempt to compare the case which has been now made out, with some other fact which presents less to bias our impartiality. It is possible to suppose, that by some extraordinary revolution throughout the civilized world, the discoveries familiar to the present generation might be lost, and science reduced to the low state in which it lay three centuries ago. Suppose also, that, in the process of ages, the progressive improvement of the human mind should revive anew the discoveries of Newton, so that they should again be generally acknowledged, and comprised among the elements of astronomy. If then, in some rude country, which had been little known or examined, the curiosity of travellers should find an astronomical treatise with this simple proposition for its basis, that our earth and the other planets revolve round the

sun, which, as the centre of the system, supports the whole: it would naturally and at once be concluded, that this people either now possessed, or had formerly arrived at the proofs of that truth, the recent discovery of which among themselves had surprised the age, and immortalized its author. Neither is the case here supposed, altogether imaginary. A similar deduction has been actually inferred from the antiquity of the Indian astronomy. From the accuracy of the tables of Trivalore, philosophers and historians have not hesitated to pronounce that a nation which we had been accustomed to consider as overspread with barbarous ignorance, must have been acquainted with geometrical science, and even with the higher branches of the mathematics, at a time when the astronomy of all the rest of the world extended no farther than actual observation.*

If, therefore, we find acknowledged among the Hebrews, an uncivilized people, at an early

* Asiat. Researches, vol. vi. and viii. Ed. Review, vol. x.

age, a sublime truth which philosophers in after-times much more imperfectly, and with far less effect, promulgated as the gradual result of long analysis; what can we reasonably suppose, but that there existed among them that undeniable evidence, either historical, or addressed to the senses, or both, which first anticipated argument, and afterwards superseded its necessity?

It is scarcely necessary to observe, in conclusion, that the farther we recede in order to account for the introduction of this belief in a Creator, the more we increase the difficulties which embarrass any other explanation of its origin than that to which it pretends. The Israelites before the age of Moses had been in a state of uncivilized life, unfavourable to the expansion of the reasoning powers, even according to their own history. But, according to all other accounts of the existence of the world, its inhabitants, the farther we look back, must have been more and more savage, till the imaginary period when the rude man first crept

forth from among his brethren of the desert, little superior to the brutes that moved around him.*

After this consideration of the extraordinary object professed by the Hebrew legislator, and of the peculiarities attending his polity; of its effect upon the people, displayed in their religious feelings, their writings, and their morals; and of the impossibility of accounting for the singular excellence of the doctrines inculcated in the law, independently of divine assistance: it is not too much to assert, that all reasoning drawn from the analogy of human manners in similar circumstances, and all historical experience as to the course of the human mind, is directly violated, if we deny that the law delivered by Moses to the Hebrews was established by divine interference, to keep up among that people the memory of the creation.

On a general view, it cannot certainly seem

* Cum prorepserunt primis animalia terris,
Mutum ac turpe pecus.—HORACE.

an improbable case, that the Creator of the world should maintain among a particular people the history of the original creation; that he should rescue that people from bondage by miraculous interposition, in order to furnish them with indubitable evidence of his protection and power; that he should assign them a specific residence, and prescribe to their observance peculiar ceremonies, as a memorial of the extraordinary providence by which he had proclaimed them the chosen depositories of the truth intrusted to them; or that he should prohibit them, under pain of grievous national misfortunes, from apostatizing to the senseless idolatry of the neighbouring countries, but enjoin them to worship one God, as the Creator of the world, who had given them such sensible evidence of his existence. This is the head and front of the Hebrew story, which carries with it, I must think, no strong offence against probability; even if no phænomena were solved by its truth, and no difficulties embarrassed its rejection; even if the historical testimony were less clear, or the internal evidence less decisive.

It is worth while, on the other hand, to recapitulate here some of the articles of that creed we must abide by, if we reject the divine commission of Moses. We must believe, first, that this lawgiver struck out an account of the creation of the world confessedly more rational and consistent than any other, but which none of the ancient philosophers could arrive at, even with all the advantages arising from the collision of intellect in a thinking and reasoning age; which none of them either taught their disciples, or gave any evident proof of believing themselves: that Moses, however, was so firmly convinced of its truth, as to take the singular resolution of instituting a civil polity for the professed purpose of maintaining it; and that he enforced his belief with such authority, as to persuade the nation to coincide with his views, and to ratify a system of laws, which *supposed*, throughout their whole fabric, a deviation from the usual course of events, and which must lead to national destruction if events *did not diviate* from their usual order: that they received statutes, for example, bind-

ing them, on *pain of capital punishment*, to abstain on certain appointed seasons, not only from business and amusement, but even from hostility and self-defence, although they were surrounded by inveterate enemies; to leave their land uncultivated every seventh year, and to desert their abodes and go up to their capital annually, in commemoration of the creation of the world, of which they knew no more than the rest of mankind, and under dread of the Creator's vengeance and power, of which they had no other proof than their legislator's word. Still, however, that nothing *did* occur to contradict the assertions of the law, or the belief it enjoined; but that the effect of this anomalous legislation was to produce, as it were, a family of theists among a world of idolaters; to exhibit a people in no other respects superior to their neighbours, except in their religious faith and worship, but in these points leaving all other nations in comparative darkness, while they enjoyed the light of the noonday sun: a people which served an immaterial Creator, and maintained a firm reliance, both

national and personal, upon his power; and who displayed, both in the principle and purity of their morals, their individual sense of the existence of a Creator and moral Governor of mankind. Is this credible? And yet all this, and much more than this,* must be embraced as true, unless we are content to acknowledge that Moses acted under a divine revelation, and that the people for whom he framed his laws had personal proof of his delegated authority. Can any thing be less consistent with true philosophy than to see an unquestionable phænomenon before our eyes, and yet to reject the only account that is offered, or can be offered, for its solution?

* I allude to the ordinances commemorating points of the miraculous history, which did not fall within my course of argument, and form the grounds of Leslie's irrefragable treatise: as the stones set up at Gilgal, the brazen serpent, the ark, Aaron's rod, &c. Can we imagine that a nation existed, venerating monuments like these, and sacredly observing certain institutions, in memory of certain events, which events never really took place; and annually celebrating a very particular ceremony like that of the passover, and regularly consecrating all their first-born male children, in memory of a deliverance, which deliverance never occurred?

The point, therefore, of the existence of an historical record declaring the fact of the creation, has all the force of moral certainty. And the nature of the case admits of no other than moral evidence. It cannot be a matter capable of demonstration, that Moses received communications from heaven. Neither can *we* receive the sensible proofs of the fact, which were manifested to the Hebrews themselves when they surrounded Mount Sinai. But the sources which are open to us, and which terminate in this moral certainty, are of the most unexceptionable nature. They are almost independent of direct human testimony: they are not founded on tradition or uncertain annals; but the evidence they furnish is derived from the internal nature and genius of the law and writings themselves, when brought into comparison with the genius of other writings, and nature of other laws. The force of this species of evidence may appear different to different readers: but all must allow that it is less than other historical evidence subject to falsification or error.

CHAPTER IV.

Conclusions from the foregoing Argument.

It only remains to review the steps we have passed, and to bring into sight the conclusion to which they have gradually led us.

It first appeared from metaphysical reasoning, that something must have existed from eternity; and that it is absurd to suppose that something to have been the material world.

It was next briefly observed, that we should violate all the rules of probability and all the philosophical principles by which we are accustomed to form our judgment and direct our inquiries, if we referred the various instances

of design with which the world confessedly abounds, to any chance or accidental concurrence of circumstances, or to any other cause than the agency of an Intelligent Contriver.

From our own existence therefore, or that of the material world, we are brought to the knowledge of a Creator; and from the proofs of design in our own persons, or in the universe, we farther derive a conviction of the intelligence of the Creator.

The brief statement of these arguments, drawn from the constitution of the world, led the way to an enquiry, whether no historical record had been preserved of an event in which mankind are so nearly interested as the creation. And the result has proved to be a moral certainty, that the Creator did originally reveal himself to the patriarchs of the human race, and afterwards caused a mode of government and a form of religion to be instituted, which should commemorate the creation of the world, and preserve the worship of the Creator.

Thus we have demonstrative evidence declaring a fact that cannot be rejected without absurdity, and analogical evidence accumulated to the highest degree, declaring that same fact probable, which historical testimony records: historical testimony so strong from internal and collateral evidence, that if it stood alone and unsupported, and concerned the most improbable fact, we could not consistently reject it as long as we admit any other recorded history; but which demands immediate and unqualified assent, when it confirms and is mutually confirmed by the deductions of our reason, and the analogy of our experience: all concurring to prove that the world we inhabit was created by a self-existent and intelligent Being.

Whether a fact which is supported by this accumulated evidence, is one that ought to bind the belief and influence the practice of mankind, will hardly be thought a reasonable question by those who consider the nature of evidence in general, and of that evidence upon

which mankind are accustomed habitually to act and depend. The evidence throughout is not certainly of such a nature, that it *cannot be denied without a contradiction.* But what evidence is of this nature? Our own existence, of which we are intuitively conscious, and the abstract proposition derived from our consciousness, viz. that something has existed from eternity, are the only facts to the present purpose which come under that description, or admit of infallible demonstration. If, for instance, we advance one step farther, and affirm *that eternal something to be matter,* our progress is arrested by the sceptic, who urges the fallibility of our senses, and our ignorance of the mode in which matter can act upon mind, and the consequent possibility, that what we imagine a material world is no more than an airy nothing and a name. If, again, we affirm the *eternal something to be spirit,* we are questioned for a proof of the existence of spirit; and are told that the same matter which "crystallizes in the mineral, vegetates in the plant, lives and is organised

in the brute; feels, thinks and reasons in man."*

It has, in fact, been the great object of infidelity, during the last half century, to introduce this sort of universal scepticism; and to throw an air of uncertainty over all those facts which cannot be proved by what is called the *highest possible evidence.* This resource remained, when the rude and direct attacks against theism and revelation had been made and foiled. The researches of that pious philosopher to whom his contemporaries ascribed "every virtue under heaven," led the way to this sceptical habit; researches which ought rather to have conducted him to the just conclusion, afterwards formed by Reid, that the premises must be false, which led to inferences so absurd. The great danger of Mr. Hume's writings consists less in any unsound principles which are supposed to be there proved, than in the prevalent spirit of scepticism which pervades the whole. And whatever may have been the intention, which

* Academical Questions, p. 251.

those who know the author's own sentiments are best able to estimate, this is the undoubted tendency of a sceptical volume, which has recently appeared under the title of Academical Questions; from which a cursory reader is likely to arrive at the tenet of the original sect, that there is nothing certain in the world.

If the existence of an immaterial Creator is not a subject of mere speculation, but a fact upon which a certain course of action, and peculiar duties, depend; it is undoubtedly material to inquire what degree of evidence might justly be supposed to influence mankind, and bind them to the performance of those duties. The highest degrees of evidence are generally acknowledged to be intuition and demonstration. But intuitive evidence only acquaints us with *our own existence*: if, therefore, we admit this species of evidence alone, we confine our knowledge, and limit our actions, to the deductions from this single fact. If we expect demonstrative evidence, the only truth relating to this subject, which cannot be denied without in-

volving a contradiction, is the naked proposition, *something has existed from eternity.* Can it be reasonably argued, that we are to extend our belief no farther, and that no actions are binding upon us, that do not result from one of these acknowledged facts?

If common sense revolts against such a conclusion, and if it is inconsistent with the nature of things, that intuitive or demonstrative evidence should reach all the various truths about which the human mind is conversant; it becomes an interesting object of inquiry, what species of evidence ought to be deemed binding upon mankind; and whether, in the view of moral obligation, there is any just ground for that distinction between the degrees of evidence which has been commonly acquiesced in.

If we consider the circumstances in which mankind are placed, it appears that the several kinds of evidence, that are derived from intuition, from demonstration, from the senses, from moral reasoning, and from human testimony,

have each their respective provinces, and, if complete in themselves, carry with them an equal degree of assurance. Our own existence we infer from consciousness. The existence of other things we perceive by sensation. Abstract truths we learn from demonstration. But the use of moral evidence, and of that derived from human testimony, is far more general; and upon these we depend, and must depend, not only in matters relating to the advancement of science and learning, but in almost every thing which concerns our conduct and directs the management of our lives.

Any attempt to exalt one of these species of evidence to the depreciation of the rest, is scarcely less unphilosophical than to misapply them. Des-Cartes has been generally ridiculed for taking the pains to prove his own existence by demonstration, which he knew from consciousness. But it is, in fact, a similar absurdity to require demonstrative proof of that which we learn by sensation, as the existence of external things; or to demand sensitive proof, or

demonstrative proof, or intuitive conviction, of that which is in its own nature incapable of any other than what is called probable evidence, viz. the existence of such or such a person, or the occurrence of any particular fact, at a thousand miles distance, or a thousand years ago.

If it be argued, that this evidence is liable to error, and may mislead us; I answer, that there is no evidence in which we may not be mistaken; and that it is our business to examine into it, and to take care that we are not deceived. We may be deceived even by trusting implicitly to intuitive evidence; by which it has been commonly asserted, that we immediately acquire the knowledge of our own existence. But Mr. Stewart* has acutely ob-

* Philos. Essays, Es. i. p. 8. "The exercise of consciousness necessarily implies a belief not only of the present existence of what is felt, but of the present existence of *that* which feels and thinks. Of these facts, however, it is the former alone of which we can possibly be said to be conscious agreeably to the rigorous interpretation of the expression. The latter is made known to us by a suggestion of the understanding *consequent* on the sensation."

served, that it is not *our own existence*, which we learn from consciousness, but the existence of *the sensation*, from which the understanding infers the existence of the sentient being.

Berkeley and Hume argue, that the senses may be deceived, and therefore require other and farther proof of the existence of a material world.* But so may reason be deceived. How grossly was the reason of the greatest philosophers from the age of Aristotle to that of Reid mistaken, in supposing that the ideas we possess of external objects were resemblances of those

* It has often appeared to me that Berkeley's argument as to the liability of our senses to be deceived, has been taken too readily and implicitly. "It is granted," he says, "on all hands, and what happens in dreams, frenzies, or the like, puts it beyond dispute, that it is possible we might be affected with all the ideas we have now, though no bodies existed without." But what do these examples amount to? A man out of his senses, or when his senses are asleep, is brought in to prove that the senses may be deceived, when sound and waking; and therefore that they never can afford any complete or irrefragable proof of the real existence of external things. Surely there is nothing legitimate either in the argument or the conclusion.

objects! It is no doubt true, that we cannot be mistaken as to the notions of our own minds; but we may be mistaken as to their relation to other notions, in which mode alone can they furnish us with demonstrative knowledge. Even with respect to mathematical truths, the proper field of demonstration; can any thing, except imagination or theory, persuade a mathematician, that he is more certain of the equality or inequality of certain angles, which he proves by demonstration, than of the real existence of the pen with which he describes his diagram, which he learns by sensation?

The object of these remarks is by no means to throw a doubt over the certainty of all evidence, but to question the propriety of allowing the justice of the distinction commonly made between the several species of evidence. In conducting the affairs of life, undoubtedly, the proper inquiry is, not whether a particular fact or proposition is supported by the highest degree of evidence, but, whether the evidence on which it rests is of the proper sort, and com-

plete, according to the matter about which it is conversant. The world is so constituted, that we must sometimes depend upon consciousness, and sometimes upon our senses; that in some cases we must be guided by reasoning, whether demonstrative or analogical, and in others by human testimony: the force therefore of each species of evidence is equal, and in their peculiar province the power of each is paramount; and all that we can require is, to know the truth according to the most infallible certainty which the nature of the particular case can yield.

Indeed, if it were not just and reasonable to place effectual reliance on what is termed *probable* evidence, the business of the world would soon stand still. Human testimony is the mainspring of all that is planned or done in commerce, at the bar, or in the senate. Moral probability is all that we attain, or seek to attain, in politics or jurisprudence, or even in most of the sciences. Nor is it too much to affirm, that every individual risks without

hesitation his health, or his life, or his fortune, or reputation, daily in some way or other, on the strength of evidence which, if it came to be narrowly examined, would not appear to have half the certainty which we may arrive at, respecting the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and the veracity of the Mosaic records.* The word *probable*, when applied to evidence of this nature, "does not imply any *deficiency* in the proof, but only marks the particular nature of that proof, as contra-distinguished from other species of evidence. It is opposed not to what is certain, but to what admits of being demonstrated after the manner of mathematicians."†

* It must be remembered, that one only of the various proofs which combine to establish the Jewish revelation, is urged in this Treatise. Many of the points of internal evidence, the whole external testimony, as well as the argument from the accomplishment of the prophecies, and the corroboration arising from the evidence of Christianity, have either been passed over or very slightly alluded to.

† Stewart's Elements of the Phil. of the human Mind, vol. ii. ch. iv. sect. 4. The remark which follows is no less important: "This difference between the technical meaning of the word *probability*, as employed by logicians, and the

The consideration as to what sort of evidence mankind are at liberty to refuse, or bound to receive, when applied to the being of a Creator, is not one of speculative inquiry, but of important and awful responsibility. No fallacious theory, no hypothetical distinction between the several species of evidence, will be available on that day, "when the last account betwixt Heaven and earth is to be made." Now, since it is not in the power even of Omnipotence itself to give *demonstrative* proof of an *historical fact*, the legitimate expectation seems to be, that the evidence of the relation of mankind to the Creator, arising from the fact of the creation, should be of the same nature and not less strong in degree, than the evidence of those facts and truths which mankind concur in believing, and on which they confidently rely, not only in their

notion usually attached to it in the business of life, has led many authors of the highest name, in some of the most important arguments which can employ human reason, to overlook the irresistible evidence which was placed before their eyes, in search of another mode of proof altogether unattainable in moral inquiries, and which, if it could be attained, would not be less liable to the cavils of spectics."

ordinary affairs, but in the conduct and management of their lives. This evidence either consists in inferences drawn by analogy, from acknowledged facts to facts which cannot be brought to the immediate test of demonstrative or sensitive evidence, which is the nature of most philosophical conclusions:—or it consists in the records of human testimony, conveyed to us by the medium of letters, or communicated by oral tradition. This, however, is precisely the nature of the evidence which has been adduced, first, for the existence of an immaterial intelligent Creator, and, next, for the fact of his having revealed himself to mankind, and preserved that orignal revelation through the instrumentality of a particular nation.

But uncertainty, it is said, attends all human testimony, or human judgment. If it is meant that we *cannot* be deceived with respect to our own existence, or the existence of something from eternity, or the equality of the angles of a triangle to two right angles, but that we *may possibly* be deceived respecting historical facts,

which cannot be susceptible of demonstration; the proposition is undeniably true. But it cannot be carried one step farther. If it were *probable* as well as *possible*, that we should be deceived, why has the probability no influence on our conduct? Why, in all matters depending on such testimony,* which includes most of the matters in which we are concerned at all, do we not only reason and dispute, but act, and shape our conduct, rather as if it were impossible than probable that human testimony should deceive us? Our belief in it, in fact, is so complete, that some philosophers have

* "In astronomical calculations, for example, how few are the instances in which the data rest on the evidence of our own senses; and yet our confidence in the result is not, on that account, in the smallest degree weakened. Even in pure mathematics, a similar regard to testimony, accompanied by a similar faith in the faculties of others, is by no means uncommon. Who would scruple, in a geometrical investigation, to adopt as a link in the chain, a theorem of Apollonius or Archimedes, although he might not have leisure at the moment to satisfy himself, by an actual examination of their demonstrations, that they had been guilty of no paralogism, either by accident or design, in the course of their reasoning?" Stewart, Elem. vol. ii. ch. iv. s. 4.

thought it too strong to be accounted for by experience of its truth, and have attributed it to an original principle.

Let a voyager, for instance, after some long circumnavigation, publish the result of his observations respecting the situation of countries, the existence of others before unknown, the degrees of temperature, and the variations of the needle; his discoveries are enrolled among the annals of our knowledge, and his experience furnishes new inductions, on which philosophers will not hesitate to found their conclusions. Voyagers, with little hesitation, have considered as ascertained what their predecessors have recorded; have judged the experience of former discoveries equivalent to their own; and have made the limits of previous narrations the point from which their own subsequent inquiries ought legitimately to begin. The utmost incredulity that is shown, supposing the fact to be very new or very extraordinary, is to require the corroborative testimony of a second inquirer. To depend, therefore, on human testimony, unless

the interest to deceive is so manifestly great, that it may be supposed to sway the narration, is neither unusual nor unphilosophical.

Should it still be urged, that, however this may be in matters of inconsiderable import, the case becomes very different where the business and direction of life are affected; we must again appeal to experience. Trace the progress of maritime discovery: demonstration could scarcely have added to the confidence which Columbus placed in his analogical reasonings. From the spherical figure of the earth, he thought it evident that the continents then known formed but a part of the terraqueous globe. From the visible wisdom of the Author of nature, he argued, that the unknown tracts were habitable. He found also, on record, certain observations of modern navigators, tending to strengthen these conclusions. "The force of this united evidence, arising from theoretical principles and practical observations,"* was sufficient to induce Columbus

* Robertson's America, vol. i. p. 89.

to risk the sacrifice of every thing that is valuable in existence. We may proceed, however, still farther, and affirm, that, but for a systematic confidence in human testimony, America would have remained for ever half peopled and uncivilized. The return of Columbus with a few followers, and their relation of the course of their voyage, and the new world they had visited, was the signal to adventurers from various countries to undertake an expedition of eight hundred leagues.

Now, it could not in equity be allowed, that a man should plead ignorance of a particular law, if it were proved that in other instances, he had availed himself of some of its provisions. If the belief of a Creator is the source of peculiar duties, for the performance of which mankind are responsible; and if the existence of a Creator on which those duties depend, is proved by evidence of the same nature as that upon which we daily direct our actions, can it be justifiable to withhold assent in the particular case where assent is most important? If a man will

risk his reputation, his fortune, his lief on probable inferences; and if multitudes are daily risking all that is dear to them on the truth of human testimony; surely it must cease to be argued, that these degrees of evidence are insufficient to warrant our acquiescing in a conclusion "so important and so extraordinary," as the existence of an intelligent Creator. For this, after all, is the fact on which scepticism is so obstinate; not one that militates against reason; that controverts our experience; that deranges our philosophy: unless reason is outraged by admitting a fact so congenial to the human mind, that it has been at times supposed to be naturally impressed upon it; unless experience is contradicted by tracing effects to a cause; unless philosophy is deranged by the introduction of a sufficient agency to account for an acknowledged operation.

I conclude, therefore, from this united demonstrative, analogical, and historical testimony, "that there is a Supreme Creator, by whom every thing exists:" the proofs of which were

proposed as the first object of this Treatise. I shall, therefore, argue that point no farther, but proceed to inquire into the attributes which either naturally belong to such a Being, or are evident from his works.

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APPENDIX.

APPENDIX, No. I.

THAT THE MOSAIC HISTORY IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH GEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES.

It may be said, that an argument founded on the internal evidence of the Mosaic history, cannot be complete without some notice, or convincing without some refutation, or attempt at refutation, of the principal objections which have been urged against it. But if the positive evidence of the whole is incontrovertibly strong, it cannot be invalidated by occasional difficulties respecting the minuter details of the history, still less by hypothetical difficulties, of which nature are those usually alleged against the Pentateuch. The object of this Treatise certainly does not admit of a particular examination of the various attacks which

have been aimed, from time to time, against specific portions of the Mosaic law, and of the history appended to it: and even if such an examination would not lead me too far from my main subject, the inquiry might well seem superfluous: the most fertile ingenuity, or the bitterest acrimony, can scarcely invent an allegation which has not been refuted a hundred times already; and the valuable work of Dr. Graves has recently brought the answers again to public notice.

I shall, therefore, confine this Appendix to the brief consideration of two subjects which are sometimes popularly urged as affecting the truth of the Hebrew cosmogony. The first of these is its supposed inconsistency with recent geological discoveries. This vague idea (for it is little more) has been in some measure cherished by a certain jealousy of geological theories on the part of some friends of Revelation: a jealousy, however, which may well be excused, since it arose from an apparent tendency, on the other side, to attribute the va-

rious catastrophes or revolutions, probable or recorded, which can be traced in our globe, to a sort of mechanical agency of its own; in other words, to natural causes arising out of its constitution. The effect of such a philosophy is, of course, to keep out of sight the interference of the Creator; and would be more consistent in the advocates of the eternity of the world, than in those who admit the fact of its creation by an Intelligent Power.

In order to form any judgment upon this question, we must begin by distinguishing what is mere theory from what is actual discovery. No doubt there have been speculations on the formation, appearances, and revolutions of the earth, which are either irreconcilable with any fair interpretation of the Mosaic history, or have left it altogether out of the question. These, however, are not facts, but hypotheses: framed in general with the intention of explaining some one of the numerous phænomena of the globe, which appeared peculiarly prominent in the view of the author, and enforced

with little consideration of the rest. These theories have, therefore, fallen to the ground successively, as legitimate science advanced.

Next to the consideration as to what is ascertained in geology, must follow the inquiry as to what is declared on the face of the history. The account of the creation given by Moses, does not profess to furnish any thing like a systematic or elaborate detail of the mode in which the materials of the earth were brought to their actual form and situation. The warmest lover of geology would scarcely expect to find this in the record; the very terms in which such an account could be expressed requiring an advanced state of science; and the information, when conveyed, being altogether unprofitable as to those uses which are the proper objects of Revelation. To know his connexion with the Creator and moral Governor of the world is necessary to the virtue and happiness of man. To investigate the regular laws to which the created world conforms, or the process by which it was reduced to that obedi-

ence, is a delightful exercise of the reason he possesses; but is totally unconnected with those higher interests which a revelation has in view.

But any curious information as to the structure of the earth ought still less to be expected by any one acquainted with the general character of the Mosaic records. There is nothing in them either to gratify the curiosity, or repress the researches of mankind, when brought, in the progress of cultivation, to calculate the motions of the heavenly bodies, or speculate on the formation of the globe. The expressions of Moses are evidently accommodated to the first and familiar notions derived from the sensible appearances of the earth and heavens: and the absurdity of supposing, that the literal interpretation of terms in Scripture ought to interfere with the advancement of philosophical inquiry, would have been as generally forgotten as renounced, if the oppressors of Galileo had not found a place in history. The concessions, if they may be so called, of the believers in Revelation on this point, have

been amply remunerated by the sublime discoveries as to the prospective wisdom of the Creator, which have been gradually unfolded by the progressive improvements in astronomical knowledge. We may trust with the same confidence as to any future results from geology, if that science should ever find its Newton, and break through the various obstacles peculiar to that study, which have hitherto precluded any general solution of its numerous and opposite phænomena.

Without professing, therefore, to search into the Mosaic account for any philosophical explanation of the structure of the earth, it will be useful to consider what we do actually find in the record, whether of matter of fact or description: that we may more distinctly perceive how the case stands at present as to the true bearing of geological discoveries upon Revelation.

So far as relates to the subject before us, the account in Genesis may be briefly summed

up in these three articles: First, that God was the original Creator of all things: secondly, that, at the formation of the globe we inhabit, the whole of its materials were in a state of chaos and confusion: and thirdly, that at a period not exceeding five thousand years ago, (whether we adopt the Septuagint or Hebrew chronology is immaterial,) the whole earth underwent a mighty catastrophe, in which it was completely inundated by the immediate agency of the Deity, and all its inhabitants destroyed, except the remnant miraculously preserved to continue the species.

These are the great outlines drawn by the sacred historian; and if we add to them what may be generally collected, that the materials of the globe were in a fluid state previous to its organization, and that the mode of its organization was not instantaneous, but a gradual process, we shall have placed before us all the important points which the records comprise, or the most zealous believer in their inspiration would think himself bound to maintain.

If such is the historical account, let us proceed to compare it with the appearances which the world exhibits. The conclusions which a natural philosopher of the highest authority thinks himself justified in laying down as certain, are these; first, "That the sea has at one period or other not only covered all our plains, but that it must have remained there for a long time, and in a state of tranquillity." Secondly, "That there has been at least one change in the basin of that sea which preceded ours; it has experienced at least one revolution." Thirdly, "That the particular portions of the earth also, which the sea has abandoned by its last retreat, had been laid dry once before, and had at that time produced quadrupeds, birds, plants, and all kinds of terrestial productions: it had then been inundated by the sea, which has since retired from it, and left it to be occupied by its own proper inhabitants." *

* Cuvier on the Theory of the Earth, edited by Professor Jamieson, p. 11, 13, and 14. Cuvier inclines to the belief, that the internal structure of the earth or crust of the globe

It is thus evident that the account of Moses, and the results attained by Cuvier, are so far from being contradictory, that they mutually coincide, and derive light and support from each other. First, the prevalence of the waters at the period of the creation described by Moses: * secondly, the separation of the land from the waters, producing a revolution in the basin of the sea: and thirdly, the irruption of the sea over the continent, at a time when its inhabitants were not very different from those which it still continues to support: are satisfactory coincidences between the sacred historian and the philosopher; coincidences perhaps too vague to be relied on solely as evidences of the facts, but certainly sufficient to meet any objections which might be insinuated on the score of geology against the other testimony to the truth of the Mosaic writings.

bears signs of more than one revolution previous to the last, or Deluge; and of some previous to the existence of animate beings. To this idea I shall allude hereafter.

* Gen. i. ver. 6 and 9. "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together in one place, and *let the dry land appear.*"

Respecting the deluge indeed, its effects, and its universality, there is no uncertainty. Whatever revolutions the materials of our globe may have experienced, it arises from the nature of such revolutions that the effects of the last in order should be most distinctly and universally visible. Accordingly, it is from the legible characters of the deluge recorded by Moses, that geology furnishes the strongest corroboration to his history. Geologers acquaint us, that as soon as we pierce the vegetable mould and alluvial soil which form the usual surface of the earth, strata of rocks appear of various descriptions, intermixed with an endless variety of hardened earths, and of calcareous and mineral substances; strata so blended and heaped together, as to baffle any hypothesis hitherto devised as to their formation: the account which is satisfactory on a partial view, or for a single district, being utterly inconsistent with the phænomena of others.

On the other hand, the Mosaic history informs us that not more than five thousand years ago

the whole inhabited world suffered a mighty convulsion, and was inundated by waters covering the highest mountains for one hundred and fifty days.

It is a problem of very difficult solution, to determine how much of that appearance of internal and external ruin which the earth uniformly exhibits is to be referred to the effect of this catastrophe. To ascertain this point with any approach to probability, we ought to be acquainted with the means employed; and the operation by which the submersion was immediately caused is only described by the historian in the most general terms. The simplicity of his expression is more suited to the awful event which it relates, than satisfactory to a philosophical inquirer: "The fountains of the great "deep were broken up, and the windows of "heaven were opened." From a description of this nature it can only be collected, (what the historian is evidently most anxious we should understand,) that the event was not occasioned by any agency belonging to the

common order of things, but by a supernatural interference.* And to this conclusion we must be brought by a moment's consideration of its nature. Nothing, surely, short of the most complete subversion of the whole globe could raise the sea to a perpendicular height of at least 12,000 feet beyond its ordinary level, or cause an equivalent subsidence of the land.† Even if we diminish in any allowable proportion the height of the antediluvian hills, still such an overthrow of the system could neither have been effected without violence, nor have taken place without corresponding devastation.

* The importance which Moses himself attached to the fact of the deluge, is evident from the manner of his narration. He represents it as scarcely less vast and extraordinary than the creation itself, and as requiring equally the immediate exertion of the Creator's power. He relates it very particularly. He prepares us for the account of it, by a solemn deliberation on the part of the moral Governor of the world; and he closes the history of it by an assurance to mankind, that the globe they inhabit should never again be subjected to a similar catastrophe.

† The greatest depth of the sea, according to La Place, is eleven miles, and the greatest height of mountains, three or four.

When we call to mind the destruction which is spread by a sudden alteration in the level of a very inconsiderable collection of water, even to the extent of fifty or a hundred feet, we cannot easily assign limits to the effect of a body of waters like the ocean pouring in over the land when its level was destroyed. We are at a loss to conceive what the power of such a machine might be, when once in operation.

Were it allowable to risk a conjecture as to the secondary agents employed in this supernatural revolution, it might seem antecedently probable that subterraneous fire would be principally concerned in effecting it. The reasons are obvious: the known existence of near two hundred volcanic openings, is sufficient proof of the extent of internal fire: the vast distance at which the shocks they occasion have been sensibly felt, gives some idea of the extent of their force, which even an intervening ocean cannot restrain.* Their accompani-

* The volcanoes of Etna and Vesuvius attest their internal communications by their simultaneous eruptions. The

ments are earthquakes, agitations of the sea, and inundations. Their consequences are destruction. The earthquake that overwhelmed Callao may have represented on a small and partial scale, the universal deluge. If we multiply that partial subversion of nature to the extent required in order to raise the sea to the level of the highest mountains, we may form some conception of the magnitude of the convulsion, though it would be impossible for us even then to determine what effect such a total disruption and submersion of all the parts which form the fabric of our globe, might occasion upon the materials of which it is composed.*

convulsions which shook Italy have been accompanied by similar convulsions in Iceland.

* St. Peter, alluding to the deluge, seems clearly to have entertained the idea of a complete overthrow of the parts of the globe. "The world that then was, being overflowed "with water, *perished*." The term *world* would not necessarily carry this argument with it, without the succeeding verse; in which the Apostle proceeds to add, "but the *heavens and* "*the earth* which are now, by the same word, are kept in "store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment." The contrast in the latter verse explains the ambiguous term in the former. Ep. 2. ch. iii. ver. 6 and 7.

From these considerations it would appear, antecedently, not improbable, that the crust of the earth should exhibit traces of the agency, perhaps I may add of the destructive agency, of water and fire. And if geological researches can be yet said to have arrived at any indisputable conclusion, it seems to be this, that there are phænomena in the strata of rocks and mineral veins, &c. which can only be ascribed to the agency of water and fire, and which may be best explained, in some instances, if we suppose those powerful agents to have been simultaneously employed.

But, leaving these agents out of the question, and adhering to the plain fact of the event and chronology of the deluge, the general conclusion may be briefly summed up in the words of the powerful authority before cited; who is of opinion that it is thoroughly established by geology, "that the crust of our globe has been subjected to a great and sudden revolution, the epoch of which cannot be dated much farther back than five or six thousand years ago: and

that the small number of men and other animals that escaped from the effects of that revolution, have since propagated and spread over the lands then newly laid dry."*

It cannot, therefore, be denied, that the natural philosopher and the sacred writer here throw light upon each other. The one points out the signs and remains of a catastrophe, which the other relates as an historical fact. The one shows us a mighty revolution of the order of nature; the other acquaints us with the agent, by whose power that revolution was effected.

Having gone back thus far, it might perhaps seem that any speculations on the revolutions which the globe may have undergone previous to that on record, would be superfluous. Researches, however, are making, as to the indications remaining of a previous æra, and even of a previous submersion. And the same great

* Cuvier, Essay, p. 171. This subject has lately received a great accession of interest and illustration from Professor Buckland's Reliquiæ Diluvianæ.

naturalist does not doubt that he has discovered numerous genera in a fossil state, which have now no existence in the world; and gives it as the general result of his inquiries, that, "judging from the different orders of animals of which we discover the fossil remains, the countries which are now inhabited had probably, before the last deluge, experienced two or three irruptions of the sea."

To attempt any explanation of a notion so hypothetical, and founded on so partial an induction as the chalk district in the neighbourhood of Paris, would be scarcely less idle than to allow any such hypothesis or discovery to militate against the moral or historical evidence on which the Mosaic records rest their immovable foundation.*

* It might be worth considering, by those who have the knowledge necessary for such a speculation, how far some of these stratifications and deposits, which are supposed to belong to successive revolutions, can be accounted for by supposing the shocks or convulsions which may have occasioned or attended the deluge, to have been successive, with intervals between them. It is worthy of notice, that the account of

To account for any of the phænomena of stratification, we must look for some agency beyond the ordinary course of nature. No causes, of which we know or witness the operation, can explain the state in which the supposed remains of a former world have been discovered. The Chinese chronology is as insufficient as the Hebrew. The accumulation, therefore, of facts like those which Cuvier has collected, and the description of fossil remains of unknown genera, form a curious and interesting subject of speculation, but can never interfere with the knowledge acquired from less disputable sources of information. The alternate revolutions which Cuvier supposes, are in the science of geology what systems beyond our own are in astronomy. They are matters

Moses rather favours such an hypothesis: "The flood was "forty days upon the earth; *and the waters increased,* and "bare up the ark, and was lift up above the earth. *And* "*the waters prevailed and increased greatly* upon the earth: "and the ark went upon the face of the waters. *And the* "*waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth:* and all the "high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered." Gen. chap. vii.

of curious reflection and sublime interest; but they lead us beyond the regions of legitimate science or certain history, into those of vague and speculative inquiry.

All, however, that I am concerned to establish, is the unreasonableness of supposing that geological discoveries, as far as they have hitherto proceeded, are hostile to the Mosaic account of the creation. No rational naturalist would attempt to describe, either from the brief narration in Genesis or otherwise, the process by which our system was brought from confusion into a regular and habitable state. No rational theologian will direct his hostility against any theory, which, acknowledging the agency of the Creator, only attempts to point out the secondary instruments he has employed. Hitherto indeed those theories have had the fate of the monsters of fabulous antiquity, and been destroyed by one another, leaving the only record to which any certain reference can be made, to triumph over their fate. It may be safely affirmed, that no geological theory has yet been proposed, which

is not less reconcilable to ascertained facts and conflicting phænomena, than to the Mosaic history.*

According to that history, we are bound to admit that only one general destruction or revolution of the globe has taken place, since the period of that creation which Moses records, and of which Adam and Eve were the first inhabitants. The certainty of one event of that kind would appear from the discoveries of geologers, even if it were not declared by the sacred historian. But we are not called

* See Cuvier, p. 40 et seqq. Professor Kidd's observations on this subject are well worth attention. In conclusion, he says, "From the endless discordance in the opinions of philosophers on this point, from the manifest inadequacy of the data we are at present in possession of, and from the physical impossibilities which must for ever be a bar to any thing more than a superficial knowledge of the earth's structure, it is preposterous to suppose that that high degree of moral evidence, on which the credibility of Scripture rests, can with any justice be weakened by our interpretation of phænomena, the connexion of which among themselves even we certainly are at present, and probably ever shall be, incapable of explaining." Geolog. Essay, ch. i.

upon to deny the possible existence of previous worlds, from the wreck of which our globe was organized, and the ruins of which are now furnishing matter to our curiosity. The belief of their existence is indeed consistent with rational probability, and somewhat confirmed by the discoveries of astronomy, as to the plurality of worlds.

APPENDIX, No. II.

ON THE DESCENT OF MANKIND FROM A SINGLE PAIR.

ANOTHER subject connected with the Mosaic account of the creation, in which the truth of that record is apparently implicated, is, the descent of mankind from a single pair. Some writers, indeed, who defend the hypothesis of distinct species, have disclaimed the idea of considering that hypothesis as contradictory to Revelation; and appeal to the acknowledged purpose, and indisputable conciseness, of the history given by Moses, as rendering it unnecessary to adhere to so strict and literal an interpretation of the text. But whatever possibility there might be of reconciling the account

of Moses with any other hypothesis than that of the original creation of a single pair, and no more; it is evident that such is the plain and natural interpretation of his history. And on this ground a popular argument is sometimes raised against his authority. It is asserted, that the different characters of the several races of mankind are inconsistent with the idea of a common descent, and constitute distinct species; and in proof of this point stress is particularly laid upon the form of the skull, which varies in the European, the Mongole, the Negro, the American, and the Malay race, very remarkably in their respective extremes; and certain varieties in the bones are brought forward, especially of the fore-arm and heel; to which are added, the striking diversities of colour. The exact details of this different organization properly belong to treatises written expressly on this subject, and I must leave them to be sought there. Without entering upon it with anatomical accuracy, there is evidently a considerable variety in the external configuration, and enough to make it a natural

question whether such varieties can be accounted for on any other supposition than that of distinct species.

This is a question which can scarcely, in the present state of our knowledge, be treated in any other mode than that of analogy. Are there any varieties among brute animals, confessedly belonging to the same original species, approaching to those which are so evident among mankind? Are there any causes to which we can confidently trace those varieties? Do similar possible causes of variety exist in the circumstances of different branches of the human race? These are the only lines of argument by which we can approach the present inquiry.

I. It is undeniable that the varieties which spring up, and are perpetuated, among inferior animals, are no less numerous or remarkable, than those exhibited by the inhabitants of the different corners of the globe. This is a fact familiar to the most common observation. While

the inhabitant of a sea-port, or crowded city, is surprised by every possible shade of hue in the human complexion, and such varieties of countenance as must naturally result from a difference in the facial angle varying from 85 to 70 degrees; the traveller through the country finds the brute creation exhibiting similar differences, and deviations not less remarkable from the original model. He sees, for instance, in almost every country, a prevailing breed of oxen: the red of Devonshire, the white-faced breed of Herefordshire, the hornless breed naturalized from Poland, the stately brown of Yorkshire, the lean and ragged Alderney, the black heifer of the Scottish hills. Among horses there is no less variety; as between the tall and bony draught-horses of Lincolnshire, the Scotch galloway, the Welsh or Shetland pony, and the breed of racers. Again, we find an acknowledged difference in the breed of sheep, as exhibited by the horned breed, that of Leicestershire, the South-down, and the Welsh, with all the intermediate varieties. Hogs vary no less remarkably, in the shape of the head, the length and size of the

leg; and one race, which is not uncommon in some parts of England, has the hoof undivided.* I do not instance the numerous races of dogs, because, owing to the extraordinary difference among them, some naturalists have controverted Buffon's theory of a single species; though even if that belief is given up, very important deviations will remain to be accounted for. The smaller animals, as fowls, hares, rabbits, &c., afford similar examples of variety, which it is not necessary to notice, except to show, that such is the plan which Nature is universally accustomed to follow.

Now, with regard to the *degree* of difference, it must be confessed that the species which have been alluded to, exhibit peculiarities no less striking than those of the European or Negro. A series of skulls, from the large head of the wild horse to the short head of the Hungarian breed, or the slender head of the English racer, would form a more remarkable instance of de-

* Noticed also by Aristotle and Pliny.

viation than that procured by the facial angle of Camper or zygomatic processes of Blumenbach, in the human race. No difference in the os calcis, or ulna, between the American and European, is so considerable as that which exists between the comparative length of leg in different breeds of hogs, or the size of the head and legs in proportion to the rest of the body in sheep. The nature of the covering of the animal, whether of the wool among sheep, or of the hair in dogs and goats, varies no less than the hair of the human head. And the animals which have been enumerated furnish as remarkable, and, apparently, as arbitrary varieties of colour as we find among mankind, from the Albino to the New Zealander or African.

The difference, therefore, is not less in degree, and it is the same in *kind;* it consists in the shape of the skull, in the length of some of the bones, in the hair, and in the colour of the skin. Yet the examples alleged have been confined almost to a single kingdom. Take the globe collectively, as in the case of man; and

the bison and buffalo will be added to the varieties of the ox; the argali, and Siberian sheep, will be placed in contrast with our domestic breed; the Ceylon horse would be instanced, which is not more than thirty inches high: and, according to the most common opinion, the dog would afford an example of the wolf or jackal in a state of domestication. Perhaps the best general idea of the natural tendency to variety, which is found in all the species of land animals, may be formed from those plates in books of zoology which present a collective view of the separate species; and as the advocates of different species in the human race take pains to show us the features and complexion most dissimilar to each other in frightful contrast, it is reasonable to employ the same method in order to counteract an erroneous impression.

II. It is evident from these instances, that there is a great tendency in nature to run into varieties of configuration, size, and colour. The question, which respects the immediate cause to which such physical diversities may

be ascribed, is less easily answered. Analogy must still be our guide. What are the acknowledged circumstances which lead to accidental deviation in those departments of nature where our observations are most certain and familiar?

In flowering plants and fruits, varieties abound, and the art of producing them is well understood. They are known to depend on the nature of the soil which nourishes them, and its comparative richness or poverty; on climate and exposure; on care or neglect of cultivation.

What cultivation effects in the vegetable, domestication effects in the animal world. The wild animal, preserving the same habits, nourished by the same food, sometimes in scarcity, and sometimes in abundance, and exposed to the vicissitudes of the seasons, assumes little variety which may not easily be traced to the operation of these causes: the same soil, climate, and subsistence, continue to produce a similar race, and it is not till these are altered that peculiar characters arise. But when the

animal becomes domesticated, all the stimulants which are found by experience to affect the breed are supplied: such as regular and abundant nourishment, and protection from inclement seasons. "The consequence is, a luxuriant growth, the revolution of varieties, and the exhibition of all the perfections of which the species is capable."* And the varieties thus springing up from time to time, whether in the wool or hair, in the form of the limbs, or in colour, are perpetuated in the offspring, and subsequently increased by a careful selection of the subjects most remarkable for the quality which it is desired to improve. "These are kept for the future propagation of the stock, and a repeated attention is paid to the same circumstances, till, the effect continually increasing, a particular figure, colour, proportion of limbs, or any other attainable quality, is established in the race; and the conformity is

* See Dr. Pritchard's Researches into the physical History of Man: a work containing a large collection of valuable facts relating to this subject, from which the author reasons with exemplary candour and moderation.

afterwards maintained by removing from the breed any new variety which may casually spring up in it."* Thus, in England, where the white fleece is preferred, the black rams are killed; in other countries equal care is taken to exclude the white variety. On the other hand, a diminution of size and deterioration of the fleece will always happen, where the greater and the less copulate promiscuously, and the young animal is restrained from growth by penury of sustenance.

III. The causes, therefore, of varieties among inferior animals may be considered as tolerably ascertained. If similar causes operate on man also, which is now to be inquired, it is natural to suppose, that we should find some traces of their effect in the countries and localities most

* A curious instance of the tendency in nature to perpetuate accidental varieties, appears in a breed of sheep, called the Ankon, the fore-legs being bent in the form of an elbow. By degrees a considerable number were obtained by selection from the offspring of a ram which first showed the peculiarity, and the breed is now regularly propagated in New England, because it is unable to get over the fences. Pritchard, p. 71.

favourable for its development; notwithstanding the advantages which man enjoys in procuring for himself artificial protection against the seasons, and the frequent and uncontrolled intermixture of families and tribes.

Accordingly, the effect of climate upon the human race is undeniable. It is observed by every traveller through extensive regions; and its influence alone has been very generally supposed to regulate that most striking variety which mankind exhibit, the diversities of colour.* "The more exact as well as more extended observations which our enlarged acquaintance with different countries has introduced, so far contradict this hypothesis, as to

* This is the received idea from the time of Herodotus: who calls the Æthiopians, ἄνθρωποι ὑπὸ καύματος, μέλανες ὄντες. ii. 2. De Pauw says, with great positiveness, "Le teint plus ou moins obscur, plus ou moins foncé des habitans qui essuient ces différentes températures de l'air entre les tropiques, prouve independamment de toute autre démonstration, que le climat seul colorie les substances les plus intimes du corps humain." Recherches sur les Americaines, p. 219.

prove that the influence of heat of climate, without other adventitious circumstances, is insufficient to account for the phænomenon." * The indigenous nations of America afford a very ample field for this inquiry, scattered at immense distances over a vast continent of a most diversified surface, including every variety of habitable climate: and the result is, that it is impossible to attribute the colour of the skin to the effect of heat alone. The Indians of New Spain, says Humboldt, have a more swarthy complexion † than the inhabitants of the warmest climates of South Ame-

* Pritchard ubi supra. I have taken the liberty of selecting from this author several of the following quotations; and indeed have derived great assistance from his volume throughout the whole of this discussion.

† It is understood, that the *proximate* cause of the difference in colour consists in the colouring matter of the rete mucosum or reticular fabric; a general capillary system lying beneath the epidermis or external cuticle. This system of vessels contains, in different people, fluids of different shades. Humboldt says, that the rete mucosum of the Negro and American contains an "abundant deposition of carburetted hydrogen."

rica. There are tribes of a colour by no means deep among the Indians of the new continent, whose complexion approaches to that of the Arabs or Moors. We find the people of the Rio Negro swarthier than those of the lower Orinoco, and yet the banks of the first of these rivers enjoy a much cooler climate than the more northern regions. In the forests of Guiana, especially near the sources of the Orinoco, are several tribes of a whitish complexion; the Guaicas, Guajaribs, and Ariques, of whom several robust individuals have the appearance of true Mestizos; yet these tribes have never mingled with Europeans, and are surrounded with other tribes of a dark brown hue. Herrera, Ulloa, and many Spanish writers, some of whom are cited by Dr. Robertson, give the same account. Ulloa's authority is of the more weight, because he had personally opportunities of making observations on the Indians in North as well as South America; and he reported that there was no discoverable difference of complexion which had any relation to climate.

The Negro race affords us another example of a stock of people spread over regions which extend themselves into almost every habitable climate, and preserving, like the tribes of American Indians, that general likeness which gives a presumptive proof of connexion in race and origin. Yet the general conclusion from a survey of Africa and the neighbouring islands, is in contradiction to the supposed effect of climate on the human complexion. There are indeed variations from the deep black, as the tawny colour of the Foulahs and Hottentots; but the lighter people live either among or in the vicinity of others, that are perfectly black, and the variety cannot therefore be imputed to local situation. The general complexion of savages is black or a dark hue, and among the nations which continue in that state, whatever climates they inhabit, though deviations occur in individuals, yet these do not go to any great extent, nor are they frequent enough to produce any general effect. They appear indeed to occur more often in moderate than in very hot climates.

It is certain, therefore, that the common opinion which refers the difference of complexion among mankind solely to the climate under which they live, and the degree of heat and cold they experience, gives at most only a partial and inadequate account of the phænomenon.

At the same time no fact can be better ascertained, than that local circumstances, degree of exposure, quality and quantity of food and state of civilization, all exercise an effect upon the human constitution, which is distinguishable in the features, size and strength of the individual. The facts observed by Ulloa and Humboldt, as to the local varieties in the American race, admit of no other explanation. The latter says, "the same style of features exists, no doubt, in both Americas; but those Europeans who have sailed on the great rivers Orinoco and the Amazons, and have had occasion to see a great number of tribes assembled together under the monastical hierarchy of the missions, must have observed, that the

American race contains nations whose features differ no less widely from each other, than the numerous varieties of the race of Caucasus, the Circassians, Moors, and Peruvians."

Mr. Jackson * has given a very minute description of the inhabitants of the different provinces within the empire of Morocco. Many of the discrepancies which he observes are material to the present subject. The first province from the shores of the Mediterranean, where *villages and walled habitations* are met with, is Haha: the neighbouring provinces being altogether inhabited by Arabs dwelling in tents. Immediately following this remark, we find the observation that " the Shelluks of Haha are physiognomically distinguishable from the Arabs of the plains, from the Moors of the towns, and from the Berebbers of North Atlas, and even from the Shelluks of Susa, though in their language, manners, and mode of living they resemble the latter."

* Morocco, p. 16.

The extraordinary power of local circumstance over the human constitution, is well exemplified by a passage in Mr. Turner's Embassy to Tibet. He tells us, that "at the foot of the Bootan mountains, a plain extends for about thirty miles, choked, rather than clothed, with the most luxuriant vegetation. The exhalations arising from the springs which the vicinity of the mountains produces, collected and confined by almost impervious woods, generate an atmosphere which no traveller ever passed with impunity. Yet even this spot is not destitute of inhabitants, though its influence has wholly debased in them the form, the size, and strength of human creatures." A messenger here met Mr. Turner, a being that hardly bore the resemblance of humanity; "of disgusting features, meagre limbs, and diminutive stature. He was of a mixed race between the Bootean and Bengalee; and it was wonderful to observe how greatly the influence of a pestilential climate had caused him to degenerate from both." *

* Embassy to Tibet, p. 21.

The effect of a precarious or insufficient supply of food is described by Volney, in his account of the Bedouin Arabs, whom he calls a race of men equally remarkable in their physical and moral character. "Their singularity is so striking, that even their neighbours the Syrians regard them as extraordinary beings, especially those tribes which dwell in the depths of the deserts. In general they are small, meagre, and tawny: they also differ among themselves in the same camp; and I have remarked that the Shaiks, i. e. the rich, and their attendants, were always taller and more corpulent than the common class. This difference can only be attributed to their food, with which the former are supplied more abundantly than the latter. It is an undoubted fact, that the quantity of food usually consumed by the greater part of them, does not exceed six ounces a day."*

In countries inhabited by the European race, the tribes that reside in hilly tracts are fairer

* Travels in Syria, i. 391.

than the people of the plains and valleys. The mountaineers of Sicily are remarkable for light hair and blue eyes, characters which are not seen in the low country on the coast.

The general complexion of the Scottish highlanders is dark; dark brown or black hair and eyes are very prevalent among them; and in some spots of the northern highlands, red hair is almost universal.

Johnson observes of the inhabitants of the Hebrides, that they are commonly of the middle stature; and that the tallest men he saw were among those of highest rank: adding, as a general observation, that in regions of barrenness and scarcity the human race is hindered in its growth by the same causes as other animals. To the same purpose it has been remarked, that the young men who offer themselves for the army in Ireland, are more generally below the given height than in England: a fact not admitting of mistake, as the standard is an infallible criterion.

These observations, which might be extended without limit from every reputable book of travels, establish beyond reasonable doubt the effect of local causes upon the physical constitution of mankind; and lead to this general conclusion, that penury of living, and exposure to changeable and inclement extremes of heat and cold, contribute to the coarseness, and what may be called the deterioration of the species. This is sufficiently shown by the examples which have been alleged.

IV. But, in order to judge of the reasonableness of attributing to the operation of these causes the whole of the phænomena under inquiry, it ought to be considered whether a reverse of the circumstances which have reduced the Bedouin or Bojesman to their state of degradation, will also reverse their physiognomical character; and whether the comforts and conveniences of civilization will produce a tendency towards the European standard of features and complexion.

The inhabitants of the South Sea isles are favourably circumstanced to assist us in this question. The presumption, both from their language, manners, and situation, is greatly in favour of their descent from the same original race; and they are living under very various circumstances of climate, and plenty, and advancement in the arts: some absolute savages, and others with great advantages of comfort and abundance. If, then, difference of civilization affects the form and features, it will be evident here: and here its effect *is* seen in the features, hair, and complexion.

O-Taheitee and the adjacent Society Isles, contain the fairest and best-proportioned people of all the numerous clusters.* But their inhabitants differ, according to their rank. "The common people, who are most exposed to the air and sun, exert their strength in agriculture, fishing, paddling, building houses and canoes, and are stinted in their food, are blacker,

* Forster's Observations on a Voyage round the World.

their hair more woolly and crisp, their bodies low and slender. But their chiefs and arees have a very different appearance. The colour of their skin is less tawny than that of a Spaniard, and not so coppery as that of an American ; it is of a lighter tint than the fairest complexion of an inhabitant of the East India islands ; in a word, it is of a white, tinctured with a brownish yellow, however, not so strongly mixed, but that on the cheek of the fairest of their women you may easily distinguish a spreading blush. From this complexion we find all the intermediate hues down to a lively brown, bordering upon the swarthy complexion. A few have yellowish brown, or sandy hair." Dr. Forster saw one man in O-Tahà who had perfectly red hair, a fairer complexion than the rest, and was sprinkled all over with freckles. When it is remembered that these people are universally acknowledged to be of the same race with the New Zealanders, who are perfectly black, and have every characteristic in the form of the savage state exhibited in their manners and customs, the gradual effect of clothing, protection, regular

sustenance, and comfort, will be distinctly seen.

Among the Negro race a corresponding difference is found. The Foulahs, according to Park, are distinguished from the surrounding tribes in Africa. They are not black, but of a tawny colour, which is lighter and yellower in some states than others. They have small features, and soft silky hair, without either the thick lips or the crisp wool which are common to the other tribes. Again, they are much more civilized than the rest of the African nations, and their manners are gentle and pastoral.

A similar tendency appears in the same Negro race, when transplanted to America; in those individuals, at least, who with the country are allowed to change the manners of their African progenitors. "The domestic servants, whose condition is little different from that of the lower class of white people, alter perceivably in the third generation; they have the nose

raised, the mouth and lips of moderate size, the eyes lively and sparkling, and often the whole composition of features extremely agreeable. The hair grows sensibly longer in each succeeding race: it extends to three, four, and sometimes to six or eight inches."*

In Hindostan, the higher caste, or Brahmans, who live in a state of ease and affluence, differ widely from the rest, not only in a distinct turn of features, but in their complexion also, which is of a much lighter shade than that of the inferior orders, both in the northern and southern provinces of India. These examples sufficiently prove the effect of civilization in bringing the complexion and features gradually towards the European standard.†

* Dr. Smith.

† "All Asiatics attach an idea of rank to fairness of colour. Why, I know not, unless it is that their chiefs are usually fairer than the commonalty: this may perhaps be owing to their being brought up with greater care, immured and sheltered from vicissitudes of climate and season: in their mature age also they are less liable to exposure." Pottinger's Travels in Beloochistan and Sinde, 150.

If the history of different nations should ever be so clearly traced as to be matter of certainty instead of conjecture, which may be the case when we attain a more intimate acquaintance with their language and annals, written or traditional, it is probable that the effect of climate and moral habits in the change of character and configuration would appear undeniably, by tracing its progress through different migrations.* It does, indeed, already show itself clearly, in many undisputed instances. The language of the Turks remains an indelible monument of their origin from a tribe of Turcomans. Yet they have long since lost their Tartar configuration; and the flat faces and squat bodies of their ancestors are no longer

* Dr. Pritchard has entered upon this subject with great ingenuity and research, and gone far towards proving a common origin, in particular, to all the nations from Egypt to the Ganges. Mr. Townsend likewise, in a recent volume, traces a connected chain of languages, which every where exhibit a common origin, and differ only in dialect, extending from Cape Comorin to Iceland and Scandinavia; whence the conclusion follows, that all these nations were colonies from some eastern country.

found among them, and have been succeeded by high features and admirable forms.

V. The tendency in the different varieties of the human race to return to the same model, leads strongly to the same conclusion with the former instances. This is perfectly understood in the Spanish provinces of South America, where the regular gradations from the alliance between a native and an European are regularly traced. The fifth generation, called Quinterone,* is the last stage, there being no visible difference between them and the whites, either in colour or features. Mr. Barrow† states a fact of the same nature with regard to the Hottentots: "Those who marry have seldom more than two or three children, and many of the women are barren. This, however, is not the case when a Hottentot woman is connected with a white man. The fruit of such an alliance is not only, in general, numerous, but are beings of a very different nature from the Hottentot; men of six feet high, and stout in proportion,

* Ulloa, vol. i. p. 31. † Account of the Cape.

and women, not ill-featured, well made, smart, and active." It tends to the same purpose, that the peculiar configuration of the Tartar or Negro is often found among individuals in every country. It is allowed even by Blumenbach, that no national form is so constant and unvaried, but that it exhibits instances of great deviation; so that we every where observe among Europeans a frequent similarity to the Ethiopian or Calmuck form.

The particular occasion and nature of the process by which these and all the varieties of which every country in the globe furnishes examples, are first produced, and afterwards perpetuated, is confessedly a secret which no researches have yet penetrated completely. It is probable that the mind is materially concerned. The perception of beauty, which seems peculiar to the human race, must have considerable effects upon the physical character, and act as a constant principle of improvement. Many of the instances which have been adduced also confirm the opinion of Johnson, who

remarks,* that "to expand the human face to its full perfection, it seems necessary that the mind should co-operate by placidness of content, or consciousness of superiority." But, without attempting to account for the fact, the fact itself is indisputable, that in every climate, every tribe, and every individual family, there is a tendency to variety in the midst of general uniformity, and some secret law of nature by which accidental varieties become permanent and hereditary.

. . . . . .

In families, this is universally acknowledged. In nations, it is matter of common observation. In different provinces of the same nation, it is not unfrequently remarked. Travellers in Italy assert, that the people of every different state have their peculiar form of features, or characteristic physiognomy. The different castes in Hindostan, who have been prevented by their religion from intermarriages, have each acquired a distinct set of features, and are all easily dis-

* Journey to the Western Islands, p. 191.

tinguished by people who are conversant with them. This must evidently be ascribed to some natural principle, which we can only pretend to trace in its effects.

But whatever this secret influence may be, it is material to remark, that in the earlier ages, in those, for instance, which succeeded the deluge, two circumstances would greatly contribute to perpetuate those varieties which local causes might produce, and, perhaps, to fix those strong characteristic features, which, in their extremes, so widely separate the different races of mankind. First, the protracted period to which the lives of the patriarchs were extended; which would, of course, allow more scope for the operation of those causes, whatever they are, which influence the form and features: the peculiarities dependent on those causes would from hence become more deeply seated in the individual, and more remarkably continued in the offspring.

Secondly: the effect produced by these means

would be greatly increased by the universal custom of adhering to one family in forming matrimonial alliances. This custom is a natural result from the patriarchal mode of life, and is always found co-existent with a certain state of civilization. The anxiety of Abraham, lest Isaac should take a wife from among the daughters of the Canaanites, with whom he dwelt, is recorded in Scripture: he solemnly enjoins his servant, that he "should go unto *his own coun-* "*try and his own kindred*, and take a wife for "his son."* We find the same related of Isaac,† who charged his son Jacob to go to Padan-Aran to the house of Bethuel, *his mother's father*, and take a wife from thence of *the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother*. There can be no doubt but that, in a state of civilization and of manners when this care to prevent intermarriages was general, the peculiar characters would be more strongly marked, and indelibly fixed, than we can expect to find them in any modern examples.

* Gen. xxiv. † Gen. xxviii.

VI. With so many facts before us, both direct and analogous, by which the varieties appearing among the human race may be accounted for, and have been accounted for by our greatest and most unbiassed naturalists, it will hardly be argued that his report of the descent of mankind from a single pair can form a solid objection to the history given by Moses of the creation. But suppose an objector to embrace the other side of the question, and maintain, that the differences existing among the human race are specific differences, and not accidental varieties; it is important to see that he has not at all advanced the inquiry, or removed the difficulty. If we once have recourse to different species for an explanation of the phænomena, the species must be multiplied beyond what the warmest partizans of that hypothesis will be disposed to allow, or they are reduced to the very difficulties from which they endeavour to escape by such violent means.

"The Negro, the American, some of the Asiatic tribes, and the European, seem evi-

dently to be different species," says Mr. White.* But what is gained by this admission, if the supposed impassable boundaries, features, and colour, are overstepped in innumerable instances within the several regions to which these different species are allotted? In Africa, there are many tribes with Negro features, but a tawny, or yellow, or copper colour:† America has her white as well as her copper and swarthy race. In Asia, what a marked discrepancy between the Circassian and the Calmuck; the inhabitants of Hindostan, and of China; the Arabs and the islanders of the Pacific! Must we suppose a distinct creation for each of these, and a hundred other tribes, which cannot be ascribed to common origin, if it is determined that features and complexion have never deviated from the mould in which they were first cast, six thousand years ago?

What shall we say of the difference between the erees, or nobles, and lower classes in the

* On the Gradations in Man. † Park.

islands of Australasia? "The former," says Captain Cook, "were, without exception, perfectly well-formed; whereas the lower sort, besides their general inferiority, are subject to all the variety of make and figure that is seen in the populace of other countries."

By the advocates of distinct species the well-known difference between the noble families of Persia and the inferior classes must be sought for in the history of their ancestors, and not ascribed to the cause to which it is generally referred, their selection of the most beautiful Circassians for their harams.

Travellers in Africa agree in relating, that almost every tribe has its distinct physiognomy. The Jaloffs are jet black, but their features approach the European model. The Foulahs, who adjoin them, rank themselves among the white people. The colour of the people of Congo differs greatly in depth of dye. Their hair is in general black and curled; but, in some instances, of a dark sandy colour. They

have neither flat noses nor thick lips, like other Negroes. The island of Madagascar is inhabited by races of people who differ considerably in their physical characters. Some tribes are of a deep black colour, with crisp or woolly hair; in short, true Negroes. Other tribes have dark and smooth hair, and are tawny. Some are copper-coloured. The people of Natal, on the eastern shore of Africa, are of a middle stature, well-made, and of graceful aspect. Their faces are oval, and noses neither flat nor high, but well-proportioned. Passing to the opposite side of Africa, we are informed, that the complexion of the Moors is of all shades, from black to white. The women of Fas are as fair as Europeans, with the exception of their eyes and hair, which are universally dark. "It is extraordinary," says Mr. Jackson,* "that the inhabitants of two cities, situated within a day's journey of each other, should discover such a physiognomical difference, as is apparent between the females of Fas and those of Mequinas;

* Account of Morocco, p. 137.

the former being generally of a sallow or pale complexion, while the latter unite that beautiful red and white so much admired by foreigners in our English ladies. The men of the *neighbouring district* of Temsena are of a copper colour."

Similar difference, both in colour and form, without any discoverable cause, are remarked by Ulloa and Humboldt in America. The natives of Guayaquil are not tawny, though the heat there is equal to that of Panama or Carthagena: they are fresh-coloured, and so finely featured as to be justly called the handsomest of all Peru.* Again, some of the Mestizoes, born at Quito, are as tawny as the Indians themselves; others have so fine a complexion, that they might pass for whites till viewed attentively.† In North America, under 54° 10′ north latitude, at Cloak Bay, in the midst of copper-coloured Indians, with small long eyes, there is a tribe with large eyes, European features, and a skin less dark than that of our European peasantry.

* Ulloa, i. 164. † Ulloa, i. 277.

There is a like diversity in the Finnish race. The Laplanders are diminutive and deformed; have black hair and a swarthy brown complexion. The Finns, though nearly related to them, are much stouter and better made: they have fair complexions, and very generally red hair.

This cursory view of the diversities existing between nations closely adjoining each other, and bearing every presumptive proof of a common origin, is quite enough to show how little would be gained towards a consistent theory, by adopting the hypothesis of several species of the human race. If we once admit the idea, that the varieties of colour and features are specific, it is impossible to assign a limit, and a thousand different tribes in every extensive district crowd upon us, each claiming, and with almost equal right, the distinction of a separate creation. The European is not more unlike the Caffre, than the Caffre differs from the Bojesman, or the Hottentot, from whom they are separated only by a range of hills.

Upon the whole, I think we are justified in concluding, that although the mode by which peculiar features and complexion become permanent, is still involved in much obscurity, yet the account of the origin of the human race, contained in the Mosaic history, agrees better with the general results concerning the appearance of mankind in different countries, than any other theory which has hitherto been proposed.

APPENDIX, No. III.

ON THE AUTHENTICITY AND ANTIQUITY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

Among the points which have been confessedly proved already, beyond the doubt of any reasonable man, I must be allowed to reckon the antiquity and authenticity of the Pentateuch. "Common sense requires that every thing proposed to the understanding, should be accompanied with such proof as the nature of it can furnish. He who requires more, is guilty of absurdity; he who requires less, of rashness." That any part of the premises on which the argument depends, may not appear to be quite overlooked, I will briefly show that these demands of Bolingbroke are in the present instance strictly satisfied.

The authenticity has been proved,* first, by a comparison of the style of the early historical books with that of the rest of the Old Testament. "No language continues during many centuries in the same state of cultivation; and the Hebrew, like other tongues, passed through the several stages of infancy, youth, manhood, and old age. If, therefore, on comparison, the several parts of the Hebrew Bible are found to differ, not only in regard to style, but also in regard to character and cultivation of language; if the one discovers the golden, another the silver, a third the brazen, a fourth the iron age; we have strong internal marks of their having been composed at different and distant periods. No classical scholar, independently of the Grecian history, would believe that the poems ascribed to Homer were written in the age of Demosthenes, the orations of Demosthenes in the time of Origen, or the commentaries of Origen in the days of Lascaris and Chrysoloras. For the very same

* See an excellent pamphlet, "The Authenticity of the Five Books of Moses vindicated," by Bishop Marsh.

reason, it is certain that the five books ascribed to Moses were not written in the time of David, the Psalms of David in the age of Isaiah, nor the prophecies of Isaiah in the time of Malachi. But as the Hebrew ceased to be the living language of the Jews during the Babylonish captivity, the book of Malachi could not have been written much after that period: before that period, therefore, were written the prophecies of Isaiah, still earlier the Psalms of David, and much earlier than these the books which are ascribed to Moses." *

The difference of style, here argued upon, is of course a subject of very nice and critical observation. The most popular proof of it is the remarkable simplicity which pervades the narrative part of the Pentateuch, and is a characteristic, in all countries, of the infancy of literature. Herodotus, the oldest profane historian of whom we have any considerable remains, bears a stronger resemblance to Moses in this respect than is to be found between

* Marsh, p. 6 and 14.

any two other authors of a different age and country. Expressions and idioms also occur in the Pentateuch, which had become obsolete as early as the time of David. What is still more decisive, is the use of Egyptian words, confirming the place of birth and education of the writer: and used to express things which subsequent authors expressed, as might be expected, in their native Hebrew.

The second and most powerful argument is derived from the unanimous consent of the Jews, who undeniably ascribed to Moses the books in question, from the period of their conquest of Palestine and first observance of the law, as long as they continued to be a people. "We are reduced, therefore, to this dilemma; to acknowledge, either that these laws were actually delivered by Moses, or that a whole nation during fifteen hundred years, groaned under the weight of an imposture without once detecting, or even suspecting the fraud."* If we dispute the evidence of his-

* Marsh, p. 8.

tory so clear as this, we may at once throw off the mask, and reject the belief of all facts with which we are not made acquainted by personal observation. The only narrative we possess of any part of the siege of Troy, is that of a poet who lived about two hundred years after the supposed events, and whose poems were not collected, or, as some conjecture, not even committed to writing, till three hundred years later. That this poetical narrative abounds with inconsistencies and improbabilities which render it utterly undeserving of *historical* credit, has been shown not more ingeniously than satisfactorily.* And yet the idea of rejecting, on that account, the concurrent testimony of antiquity which tells us that Troy was taken by an armament fitted out from Greece, has been always justly treated as a learned delirium. Why is this, but because the concurrent testimony of successive generations, from the supposed event to the time we dispute about it, is exactly the sort of evidence which we want, and which the case

* Bryant's treatise on the Siege of Troy.

allows? so that to require more, becomes, as Bolingbroke justly says, absurd.

Against the whole weight of this evidence it is merely alleged, that a few expressions and passages are found in the Pentateuch which must have been written after the time of Moses: such as that a city which was originally called Laish, but changed its name to that of Dan, after the Israelites had conquered Palestine, is yet denominated Dan, in the book of Genesis;* and that an allusion is made in Genesis† to the kings of Israel, which implies a writer subsequent to the establishment of the monarchy.

* Gen. xiv. 14. See Marsh, p. 15.

† "These are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom "*before there reigned any king over the children of Israel,*" Gen. xxxvi. 31. Another passage occurs, in which the intrusion of a marginal remark is still more evident: Deut. iii. 14. "Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob "unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi, and called them "after his own name, Bashan-havoth-jair, *unto this day.*" On a less honest principle, but leading to similar variations, the Samaritans introduced into their copy of the Pentateuch some readings intended to justify their pretensions as to the sacredness of Mount Gerizim.

That the modern name, in the first instance, was substituted for the obsolete term Laish, by a transcriber who was more anxious to be easily understood by his readers, than to preserve the integrity of the text, it is abundantly natural to suppose: and the clause in Genesis xxxvi. has every appearance of being interpolated, perhaps from some remark at first added as a marginal note, by an inconsiderate copyist in a later age. Similar errors are of most frequent occurrence in every ancient writer; and their effect is to furnish strong presumption against the authenticity of the passage itself; but no critic would venture to question the reputation of the work in which they are found, on grounds so slight and easy of solution, even if its authenticity depended on no other evidence than the general testimony of antiquity.

Yet such are the trivial errors, which are sometimes alluded to in general terms, as sufficient to overbear the various concurrent evidence in favour of the authenticity of the Pentateuch, and to give probability to the spurious account of an

apocryphal book, which states that the books originally written by Moses and Joshua, had been destroyed, and the deficiency supplied by inspiration delivered to Ezra.*

It is familiarly known to all who have turned their thoughts to this subject, that the book of Esdras has never been considered as possessing the least claim to authority, and gives the strongest grounds for suspicion from the internal evidence of both style and matter. But there is no occasion for recourse to such disputable arguments. The providential preservation of the Samaritan Pentateuch, agreeing in all essentials with the Hebrew, affords an irrefragable proof of the authenticity of both :† for it is known, first, how long before the Babylonish captivity, the ten tribes under Rehoboam sepa-

* See Apocrypha, 2 Esdras, chap. xiv.

† "As the Pentateuch is the only part of the Bible which is received by the Samaritans, their copies of it must have been derived, if not from those of their ancestors, who seceded from the tribe of Judah, at least from some copy antecedent to the Babylonish captivity." Marsh's Lectures, p. ii. l. x.

rated from their brethren: and secondly, how inveterate an enmity existed between the two branches of the Hebrew stock. If, therefore, the authority of the uncanonical Esdras is to be admitted, the entire agreement between the writings which he pretends to have restored to the Jews, and the Samaritan copy of the law, remains to be accounted for; and can only be ascribed to one of the following causes: either he adopted a copy from the Samaritans, which had been received and observed by them from a remote period as sacred and authentic; or he persuaded the bitter enemies of the tribe of Judah to credit his pretended revelation, and accept a history bearing the name of their revered ancestor and legislator; or the account given of himself by Esdras must be received as literally true, and the agreement between the copies ascribed to his miraculous inspiration. There is unquestionably a phænomenon which can only be explained by one of the solutions, and we may safely leave objectors to take their choice among them.

The *authenticity* of the Pentateuch implies of course, its *antiquity*. Still the questions are separate. The latter is briefly considered in Sect. III. It has become the less necessary to go at length into either of these subjects, since the recent publication of Dr. Graves; who employs the six first of his valuable Lectures in alleging the evidence for "the authenticity and truth of the Pentateuch;" and has besides, in his Appendix, minutely considered the texts originally urged against it by Le Clerc, subsequently refuted by Witsius, and most of them retracted by Le Clerc himself, together with the conclusions he had grounded on them.

THE END

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The Jewish Sense of Responsibility.

The Rev. Morris Joseph in Reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Rev. MORRIS JOSEPH devoted his sermon at the Berkeley Street Synagogue on Sabbath last to an examination of some remarks made by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the recent World's Temperance Congress. The Archbishop implied that the Jewish sense of responsibility in regard to evils like intemperance was feebler than the Christian. As against this idea Mr. Joseph cited the great Mosaic precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Those who received that precept, he said, were introduced into a region of boundless social obligation. Never could they shelter themselves behind the plea that the woe of the world was no concern of theirs. It was just as much their concern as was their own pain. No true Israelite, even in the Mosaic age, could ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" He was warned "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox go astray; thou canst not hide thyself—as a son of God, as a moral being, thou canst not." And as the parallel passage in Deuteronomy proved, the word "brother" included even an enemy. The Prophet had tersely expressed the warning: "Thou shalt not hide thyself from thine own flesh." What the Law taught the Rabbins amplified. We are bound, they said, to relieve the poor of the Gentiles, to care for their sick, to bury their dead, to comfort their mourners, equally with our own. "Separate not thyself from the community," they enjoined us. No one, they declared, has the right to dissociate himself from its interests, to withdraw from the task of bearing its burdens, of curing its ills, of righting its wrongs. And this duty was of the widest. The Jew was admonished to identify himself with the welfare of the country in which he lives, to pray for its prosperity, seeing that its prosperity is the guarantee of the peace and security that are the foundations of the social order. Within the last century, representative Jewish assemblies had met at various times to set forth the tenets of Judaism, and in every case the duty of zealously promoting the general weal was placed in the forefront of the pronouncement. The foundation of the social ethics of Judaism was the eternal principle of the common brotherhood of humanity. "Let no man urge," the Rabbins say, "'because I am vile, my neighbour shall be vile also; remember that so to argue is to despise God's image, which is imprinted upon thee and thy neighbour alike." Such was Jewish theory; what of Jewish practice? Did Jews make excuses, and say, "this or that social evil does not touch me; therefore, I will not move a finger to cure it"? Was not Hospital Sabbath itself a living proof that the Synagogue takes its place by the side of the Church in the noble work of alleviating human suffering? And that was but a typical example. Were Jews ever behind their neighbours when any common work of beneficence was to be done? No; the memory of the long drawn-out agony of their race, far from forbidding their co-operation, only served to stimulate their compassion for woe like that which was appealing to them that day. If there was one charge that might truthfully be brought against some of their number it was rather the tendency to indulge the humanitarian sentiment to the neglect of the specifically Jewish. Israel, said Jehudah Halevy, was the heart of the nations, the most sensitive part of the great organism of humanity. He felt every experience, every emotion, every sorrow of mankind, with especial keenness. And the evincing of such sensitiveness was the best refutation of all such charges as that to which the Archbishop had lent his sanction. Let them, then, generously respond to the cry of the hospitals, first because of their kinship with the sufferers, but also because they were Jews, bound to vindicate the good name of their faith and their race.

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